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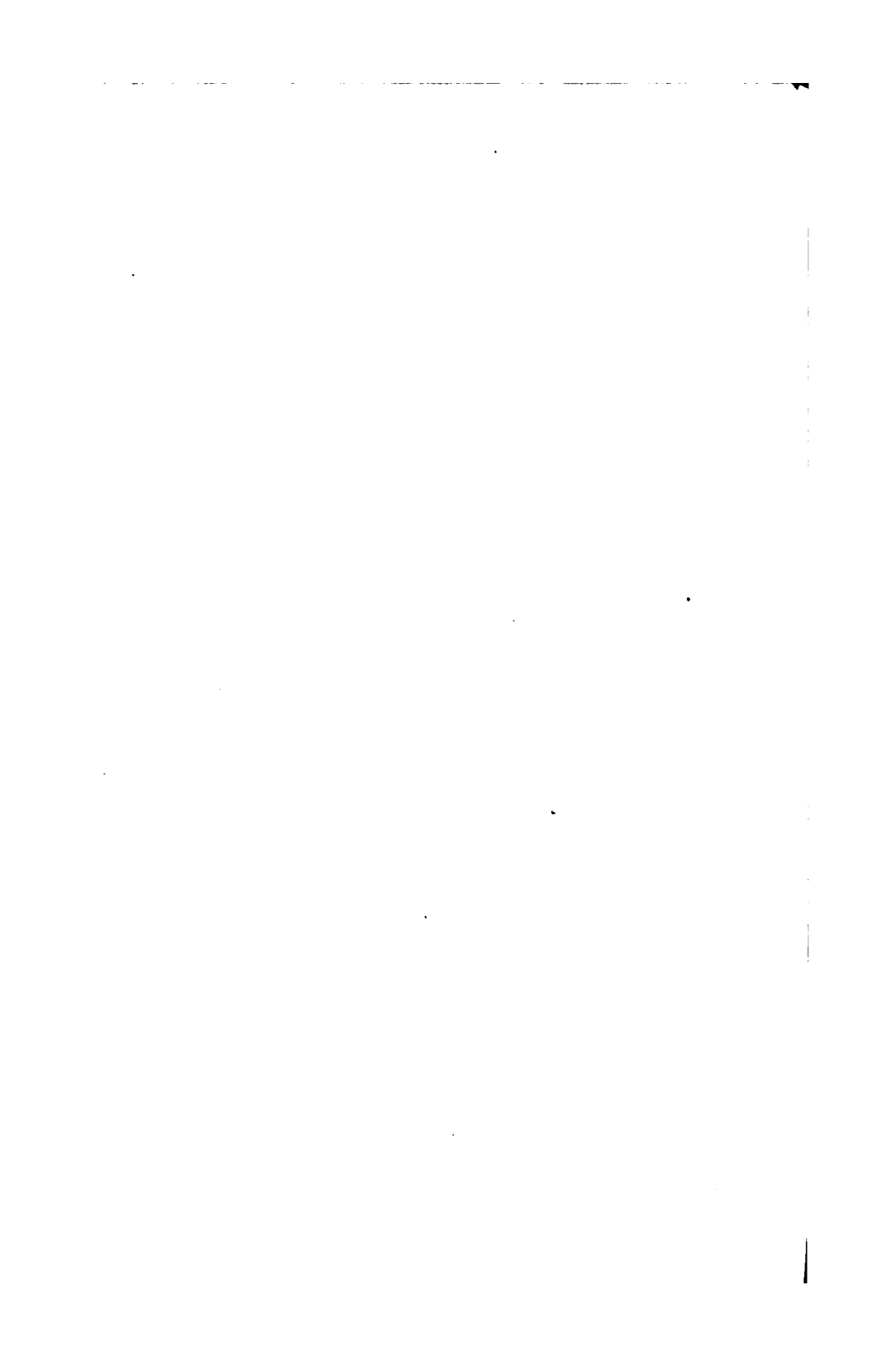




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CHURCH AND CHAPEL.

VOL. I.



# CHURCH AND CHAPEL.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"HIGH CHURCH," "NO CHURCH,"

AND

"OWEN—A WAIF."

"Those who do not live by His life, do not belong to Him, by whatever name they may call themselves, and whatever confession of faith they may sign. Belonging to a Church or sect is nothing."—*Dying words of Bunson.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:  
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,  
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,  
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1863.

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250. 0. 46.





LONDON:  
PRINTED BY MACDONALD AND TUGWELL,  
BLENHEIM HOUSE, OXFORD STREET.

**C O N T E N T S**  
**OF**  
**THE FIRST VOLUME.**

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# BOOK I.

CHIPNAM—GARTHSHIRE.

VOL. I.

B



# CHURCH AND CHAPEL.

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## CHAPTER I.

### VALE STREET CHAPEL.

THE church people were going up-hill, and the chapel folk coming down. For the church of St. Martin's, whence the new peal of bells awoke a harmony that Sunday evening, was perched on the brow of the hill at one extremity of Chipnam, and the little Vale Street Chapel, where the cracked ding-dong of the bell was sounding, was situated at the bottom of the hill, and consequently at the further end of the town—damply situated and coming in for all the “rushings” and drainings in wet weather—and they revelled in wet weather, Chipnam way.

Chipnam was a town situated in the hilly county of Garthshire, a busy excitable little town, where industry and energy made way, and idlers came to grief. A town famous for a peculiar comestible called "Chipnam cheese-cakes," that were sold by clean little boys in aprons at the Chipnam station, and were packed in tins once a day and sent to London—lying just a hundred miles away from the town wherein our story opens.

We say a busy and excitable town advisedly ; for, although the population showed but sparsely in the last census, yet the majority of inhabitants were of the high-pressure order, and had energy enough for thrice their number. When there was a great political grievance, Chipnam people held more meetings in their town-hall, over the mouldy market, than any city congregation in the United Kingdom ; and to this day the High Court of Parliament is in ignorance how nigh Chipnam was to proclaiming itself a Confederate State when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for the time being, calculated that a tax on cheese-cakes would produce a few additional thousands to the

revenue, and form a very handsome addition to the Budget.

Surely the country has not forgotten the famous amendment of the member for Garthshire, the withering satire of his comments, and the triumph of Chipnam when the House resolved itself into committee and crushed the odious suggestion into nothingness?

Proceeding up-hill with the church people, or down-hill with the chapel folk that Sunday evening early in April, affords us a glimpse of the town and of the major part of its inhabitants. An old-fashioned town, with many quaint old houses,—which antiquarians, before and since the time we speak of, have travelled many miles to gaze at—gable-roofed, lattice-windowed, lop-over houses, with oaken rafters crossing plastered walls, and grotesque carvings over shop-fronts and door portals. A few of these near the church; a few less antiquated and odd-looking half-way down the hill, and round about the market: a few more modern where the road narrowed, the hill ended, and Vale Street was finished neatly off by Vale Street Chapel, a red-brick building, with



two windows too many in the front, and half-a-dozen too few in the rear.

A back street or two behind the principal thoroughfare—which of course was called High Street, after immemorial custom—a dingy court or two at the back of the market; two inns, one hotel, and another little church between the railway-station and the town—a very small steepleless building, that was called a church out of compliment, and had been built from a legacy of eighteen hundred pounds bequeathed for that especial purpose by a pious cheese-caker, who had departed this life and Chipnam pomps and vanities in the year of grace 1807.

Speaking profanely, that particular church drove the most sorry business in Chipnam; the town's-people objecting to the locality, especially in wet weather, when the one field to be crossed was a Slough of Despond that damped the ardour of the stanchest "follower." Of the church more hereafter—it is at present but part of the landscape of the higher ground, as we wander on with the church and chapel-goers. The green hill be-

yond, with its broad back turned to the setting sun, had left it in the shadow of a premature twilight ; and but few of the town's-folk were thinking of St. Edward's, as they jostled one another, at a quarter past six, in the streets of honest Chipnam.

6.15 P.M. was also the hour that the London train reached Chipnam on Sundays, and the shrill whistle of the locomotive added its piercing note to the clamour of the bells—cracked and otherwise—that rang from the belfries, and echoed amongst those hills which hemmed the town in, whose tops pierced so often the rain clouds which were driven towards them by the south-west winds.

Chipnam might be called a pious town in its way. It was almost a superfluous formality for the train to stop there on Sundays ; no one patronized Sunday travelling in Chipnam, except one or two third-class roughs from the back streets before mentioned, and a few atheistical tourists, who wished to stare about them for an hour or two, before proceeding further North by later trains.

There were two arrivals by the 6.15 train

that particular evening — one third and one first-class passenger, both of whom seemed in no hurry to proceed townwards after the train had given another whistle and rattled off again. The first-class passenger stood a little while talking to the guard about the portmanteau he wished taken to the booking-office ; the third wandered out of the station, after a furtive look at his fellow-traveller from under the brim of an exceedingly shabby hat, and, taking up his position near the railway arch, crossed his arms on the parapet, and looked down some hundred feet below him at the line of rail that swept round the curve of the Chipnam hills, and ended in a black hole of a tunnel fifty yards further on. Evidently neither of these travellers a church or chapel goer; for third-class drew a newspaper from his pocket, spread it out on the parapet, and proceeded to read, whilst first-class came up the steps two at a time, whistling “ Auld lang syne ” his hardest.

A desperate flight of wooden steps from the high-road to the railway station, trying to

good lungs, and overpowering to bad ones—the horror of old ladies and gentlemen, who went down with a tenacious clutch at both hand-rails, or came up on their hands and knees, panting fearfully, and sat down exhausted on the mile-stone or the hedge-banks when the ascent was over. The first-class traveller had good lungs; for, as before remarked, he came up two steps at a time, and whistled as he came — becoming a little puffy and disjointed in his cadence as he advanced nearer the summit, but resisting manfully to the last, thinking of the hero of Longfellow's "Excelsior," and other climbing boys.

"Ha'a!" he exclaimed, as he strode into the middle of the country road; "a breather, by George!"

He flung his head back, squared his broad chest, took his hat off for a moment, and let the evening air cool a square, massive forehead.

"Yes, it's a breather," he added a second time, looking round as if to note how his fellow-traveller had borne the ascent.

But the fellow-traveller had screwed him-

self round, and supporting his head with two thin, large-veined, dirty hands, was apparently deeply interested in his newspaper. He had nothing to do with first-class passengers, and took no interest in them.

What did it matter to him that the stranger in the middle of the road was a man of powerful frame, evidently possessing a health that valetudinarians might envy, very possibly of a constitution made to enjoy life and see life at its best—one whom the world had not treated badly. Third class had been treated but indifferently well by the world; his health was not of the best, the prime of life had long been passed, and in the world's battle—by his own fault or the faults of others—the prizes had fallen to the share of others more fortunate than he. Let him turn his back upon the lucky one standing with his hat off in the centre of the road, and read his newspaper, till the fellow had taken his way towards the town.

First-class stood for a little while enjoying the fresh air and the fair landscape, taking in the figure of the shabby man leaning over the

railway bridge, or studying his newspaper; and then when the bells had ceased ringing, and a strange stillness had followed the clamour, he put his hat on with a suddenness and briskness not a little characteristic, and marched off at a smart pace towards the town.

Past the field, beyond which stood St. Edward's Church, down a narrow turning which led into Chipnam, and then, abjuring the red-tiled causeway, striking for the middle of the High Street, and sailing down the town as though it belonged to him.

Down Vale Street,—which was but a continuation of High Street,—and pausing for a moment before the little chapel, one door of which being open for the sake of ventilation that warm spring evening, offered a glimpse of the interior of a barn-like building, lighted by gas, and fairly filled with worshippers.

They were singing a hymn as the traveller paused; rude, boisterous singing, mayhap, but still with a heartiness and a genuineness which, softened by distance, seemed to impress the watcher, whose face became a shade more grave.

"That's the first greeting from the old times," he said; "it was always a favourite of Jemmy's."

He went on at a smart pace again, further away from the town, half a mile away, at least, towards a neat little house bordering the country road, standing in its own plot of garden ground, and having rose-trees growing about its windows, and over the trellised porch before the door. The traveller opened the gate in the low oaken fence, and went up the garden path towards the house. He was a very tall man, for he had to stoop to prevent his hat coming in contact with the trellis overhead, as he applied himself to a long and elaborate fantasia on the knocker.

"They'll know that's Bob's knock," he said, with a little chuckle of self-conceit, which was not of long duration, no one being unnecessarily excited by Bob's knock, or feeling disposed to respond thereto. A repetition of the same, and no notice taken from within; only the attention of a dawdling

village boy arrested by the tall man's appearance under the porch.

"Do ye want the deesenting parson, zur?" was the sudden ejaculation of this youth, at the top of his voice.

"Ay; or the deesenting parson's sister, or some one."

"Why, they be all gone to chapel, o' course."

"Servant, and all?"

"Yes, zur, to be sure."

"To be sure," repeated the stranger; "and why aren't you at chapel like the rest of them?"

"I'm not a deesenter," said the boy, with a half grin, and a half sheepish expression of countenance; "I b'long to St. Martin's."

"So it appears," returned the traveller, drily.

The boy was satire proof, and continued to lounge over the fence, and indulge in idiotic stares.

The stranger, doubtful of the facts as stated, or of a restless and inquisitive dispo-



sition, walked round the house, peered through the window nearest the porch, even tried the window, which flew up easily to his touch.

"Rare confidence in human nature, and the aborigines of Chipnam," he muttered, as he closed the window; "that's Jemmy all over, at any rate."

He retraced his steps, and closed the gate again. The boy, interested in the stranger, continued to stare after him, as he wended his way back towards the town. In Vale Street once more, and once more standing before Vale Street Chapel, where the gas seemed burning more brightly now, and where the congregation were simmering in its heat.

The stranger walked into chapel, looked round him anxiously, and then halted in the narrow aisle, to nibble at the rim of his hat. There was a click to the latch of an adjacent pew, but he took no notice; failing in the object of his search, he had directed his attention to the central figure in that chapel—the man in the pulpit facing him, a tall, dark-eyed, powerfully-built young man, expounding from the

Bible lying before him on the pulpit cushion.

The preacher looked towards him once, he fancied, but betrayed no sense of recognition, although the new comer's eyes lighted up, and his face flushed with a pleasurable glow. The new comer was still regarding the preacher, when the young man who had opened the pew-door tapped him on the shoulder impatiently, almost angrily.

"Come in here," he whispered sharply.

He glared so fiercely at the stranger, from under a pair of bushy black eyebrows, that the advantages of the invitation did not appear to strike the traveller.

"You must not stand there, sir, staring about you," he whispered again.

The startled stranger took the hint at last, entered the pew, and was making for the extremity thereof, when a muscular hand almost forced him into a seat, and the fierce face of his tormentor frowned him into subjection.

The traveller sat a little bewildered, and looked even a little indignantly at the uncere-  
monious dissenter, whose feelings he had probably shocked. The young man was very

thin, had very wiry black hair, that stood up all manner of ways, and submerged the parting he had attempted an hour ago ; he was very white-faced and hard-featured, and wore a surtout coat, that was buttoned to his chin in despite of the faulty ventilation which Vale Street Chapel afforded. The stranger turned to his next neighbour by way of relief, but there was nothing in *her* to refresh his weary vision. An old woman, white-faced and hard-featured too,—a slim and stony woman, with a pair of horn-framed spectacles, through which her grey eyes were preternaturally magnified to an owl-like horribleness. He caught a glimpse of a pretty-faced girl on the other side of her, or rather he was attempting to catch a glimpse, when balked by the spectacles facing him and curdling his blood. He looked straight before him after this, till a small Bible and hymn-book were thrust into his hands by the young man on his right—the Bible open, and a decisive-looking thumb-nail indicating the verse which the minister was expounding at that particular moment.

The stranger said “Thank you” somewhat

too audibly, at which the young man frowned once more, and the old lady on his left gave him a sudden nudge in his side. All went well after that admonition; the preacher continued to expound, the traveller to regard the open Bible before him, his neighbours old and young to pay great attention to the preacher's words.

49 A young preacher, with a ready flow of words, simply chosen, and spoken with an earnestness and a clearness pleasant to hear in preachers of every denomination under the sun. In the prayer that followed the exposition, but still more in the sermon that followed the prayer and the hymn, the earnestness became singularly apparent; it became an eloquence that carried away the preacher, kept his audience attentive, and struck home with many a telling word, each of which might have been a cloth-yard shaft aimed at the heart of his listeners.

It was an earnestness that gave a concentrativeness to his discourse, rather than a loudness to his voice; he spoke out boldly, but there was little shouting, and no hammering of the dust from the cushion on which one

white clenched hand pressed heavily. It was an unsparing sermon—thin-skinned people might have called it a morbid sermon ; but there had been some backsliding in his flock of late, and he had much to warn them and a little to reprove them of. People require rousing now and then, and being told whither their pet sins are driving them.

The man who had arrived that evening at Chipnam by the 6.15 train, rested his hands on his knees, and leaned forward to catch the preacher's words ; once or twice his broad chest heaved, and once he glanced towards the young man who sat with his arms crossed, *à la* the Bandit of the Abruzzi, very attentive, but looking very stern and disagreeable and Sphinxy. The service closed with a hymn, in which the young man joined with an extraordinary vociferousness—taking the lead of the congregation, and irritating his neighbour excessively.

“If there be any canting methodistical prigs in Chipnam town,” he muttered to himself, “this is one, or I’m a Dutchman.”

Robert Bayford was not a Dutchman, and yet

he was wrong. There was no cant in the man by his side—no priggism, if the reader understand that expression. Hard and unamiable, perhaps—we shall see as we cut into our story more deeply—but nothing of the Maw-worm *genus*.

It is easy for men whose frank natures repel deceit in any form to attribute hypocrisy to those of a nature more reticent than theirs—the mote in our brother's eye has been always such an easy thing to see!

They were crowding out of chapel, those honest dissenters, at five minutes to eight o'clock; streaming into Vale Street, three-fourths of the tide making for the town higher up the hill, the remaining quarter turning towards the dark country road, and the peasants' cottages lying apart from the town, and even dotting the green Chipnam hills.

The stranger sat out the congregation, much to the suppressed indignation of the wiry-haired man at his side, who seemed inclined to resent his stay as a personal affront to himself. He and the old lady in the horn spectacles and the pretty girl beyond passed

out of the pew, and left the traveller and the pew-opener—who had been invisible until that period—the sole occupants of the chapel.

The pew-opener, a purblind old woman, with a green shade to her bonnet, tottered in his direction at last.

“Where’s Mr. Bayford?” he asked.

“He always stays some time in the vestry after the sermon, sir. He won’t be out yet.”

“I’ll wait.”

“He don’t care to be talked to of a Sunday, after chapel, sir.”

“He’ll let me talk, I fancy.”

The pew-opener did not understand his answer, and moved slowly up and down the aisle, passing into the pews and turning out the gas. A silent, gloomy place the chapel became after a while, with one jet feebly burning over the little door behind the pulpit, and the other close against the outer doors opening into Vale Street. So still and quiet everything, with the pew-opener finally perched on a pulpit stair, waiting for the minister’s appearance to extinguish the last burners, lock the door, and go home, that the traveller, op-

pressed thereby, began to doze and forget his whereabouts, until the vestry door slammed to and the preacher came forth. A tall, grave-looking young man, till his face lighted up with a smile as he glanced towards the pew-opener.

“Good night, Mrs. Brown.”

“Good night, sir,” with a curtsy.

The traveller rose from his seat, like the ghost of the past from which he had emerged. He came rather noisily from the pew, and the minister cried “Hush!” as though a noise at that time and in that place jarred upon him.

“Jemmy—dear old Jemmy!” cried the traveller, with both hands extended.

“Robert,” was the answer.

The brothers shook hands very heartily together, and then went out into the street.

“This is like the old times, Jemmy,” said the new comer as he passed his arm through his brother’s, “you and I coming out of chapel together. You were a plaguy long time coming out though—what hindered you?”

“Can’t you guess?” said the other quietly.



"Ah! I beg pardon—I see," returned the other.

They were silent several minutes, during which both men, walking fast, were now beyond Vale Street and on the high road.

"This is a great difference, old fellow—you a preacher at last, after all my doleful prophecies, and all my scoffing at the folly of the idea."

"You were always a poor scoffer, Robert."

"You would have been a rich man if you had followed my advice," grumbled Robert.

"Do you wish I had followed it?"

The man thought of the crowded church, the earnest preaching of his younger brother, the interest of his soul-touched listeners.

"No," he answered.

"Thank you, thank you—besides, Robert," pausing in the roadway, "who wished it, too, with all her heart? You don't forget?" he added reproachfully.

"Forget the old mother, Jemmy? What do you think of me?"

"What do I think of you?" repeated the young minister.

“Ay—that’s the question.”

“That the heart’s in the right place still, Robert—if the heart be stubborn at times, and the spirit rebellious!”

“The spirit brings me to Chipnam—is that a rebellious feeling?”

“It depends.”

“It brings me to your house, and to the younger brother, who took the father’s place when the elder—ever a selfish man!—went away to India to seek his fortune.”

“It brings you hither, of course,” said the other; “but, Robert, lad, not too much sentiment about brotherly affection. I saw Amy Saville yesterday.”

“You’re sharp, Jemmy—but you were always a sharp one in your way. Let us get home, or our sister will be chary in her welcome. If she scolds, you must take my part.”

“Haven’t I taken your part all my life, Robert?” said the other, laughing.

The genial manner of the elder brother, that meeting, after many years of separation, had thawed the minister’s grave demeanour won-

derfully. There was a striking likeness between them both at that time.

“And will always take my part, Jemmy?”

“I promised mother.”

“Poor old lady! she had always an idea that I should not get on in the world. What a mistake!—eh?”

“Let us hope so.”

“Here’s the favourite son, a poor dissenting preacher, and the scapegrace a man of property, Jemmy.”

“Still I shall take your part, Robert—God willing.”

“Well,” with a laugh at the brother’s gravity, “it’s a promise!”

## CHAPTER II.

## ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH.

MEANWHILE, what has become of the third-class passenger by the 6.15 train? We left him deep in the perusal of his newspaper, which he continued to study until Robert Bayford had turned in the direction of the town, when he faced about, thrust his hands into his trousers'-pockets, and leaned his back against the brickwork of the parapet. By the action the newspaper glided off the coping-stone and went fluttering on to the railway-line beneath ; but his interest was extinct in last week's news, and he gave but a careless glance over his shoulder at his loss. Next

week's news—to-night's—was all in all to him ; what would it be like, and how would it affect him ? Next week there would be money in his purse, he prayed ; he had come to Chipnam in search of it, and, though it was not his first appearance in the town, he did not despair of yet finding therein his golden mine.

He was a man whose age it was difficult to guess. Old Time scores a fair register on one's face if left to himself ; but when trouble, scheming, even drink, interferes with it and crosses it, the reckoning up of the lines is a difficult task. His was a face more shrivelled than time-worn ; at first sight the face of a man of sixty-five or seventy years of age—at second sight suggesting the thought whether, if he had had less trouble, or been more steady in his youth, he would have looked a greater age than fifty years or so. A hatchet-faced man with keen eyes and thin blue lips ; wrinkled and sallow as Hecate, with some patches of grey hair straggling from under his shabby hat, and a grey stubble making itself prominent on his chin, after a fortnight's

neglect of the razor. Evidently a poor man, by the frayed and torn coat buttoned across his narrow chest, and by the disreputable boots crossed one over the other, whilst he ruminated upon his next step in life.

Presently the guard who had taken his ticket on the platform sauntered from the railway station and glanced towards the traveller. The guard had been born and bred in Chipnam town, and knew all its inhabitants—men, women and children—by sight. The man with his back to the bridge was a stranger, and might require some information; and having nothing to do till the nine P.M. mail train arrived, he was a man most willing to afford it.

“A fine evening,” he ventured to remark.

The stranger looked inquisitively at him from under his hat. A furtive-looking gentleman, when he adopted that peculiar habit of his. If he had tilted his hat less forward towards his nose he would have borne a better character through life—but it *was* a habit, and he was too old to shake it off.

“Yes, it’s a fine evening,” the other assented—“for Chipnam.”

"Well, we have a goodish deal of wet here, owing to the hills, you see."

"Do you call Chipnam a large town?"

"It's a fine little town;—not particularly large."

"Any chance of a man like me getting a situation hereabouts?"

"Well," was the hesitant answer, "they don't care about strangers down town. I suppose it depends upon what sort of a situation you want, and what you can do."

"I can do anything," was the conceited response.

"Ah! that is uncommon lucky."

The man who could do anything detected the irony of the remark, and laughed at it. He was a man not easily put out, and he had a great opinion of his own abilities.

"If there's a solicitor in the town I can be his drudge; if there's a doctor I can compound his medicines; if there's an author I can write his books, or tell him from what out-of-the-way volumes he can crib an idea, and the over-wise critics be never the wiser; if a traveller's wanted, I can praise bad goods; if the preachers

are bad ones in these parts, I can give them six histrionic lessons for a guinea, my man."

The stranger spoke very rapidly, looking down at the roadway meanwhile, keeping his hands still in his pockets, and his back to the railway bridge. The guard—a rosy-faced young man, with a blade of grass in his mouth—seemed rather pleased to have fallen into such good company, or to have met with such a curiosity, and plumed himself upon drawing the stranger out. He did not quite understand all he said; but then he was a Londoner, and had funny ways with him for Chipnam. He'd draw him out a little more.

"But they're not bad preachers hereabouts—we're uncommon well up in preachers down town."

"Good enough for these parts, I dare say."

"For any parts," said the guard warmly.

"Who plays first fiddle?"

"Eh?"

"Who's the leading character, with a line to himself in the bills, and his name in Brobdingnagian capitals?"



“Do you mean who’s the best preacher?”

“Yes.”

“Well, it depends upon your profession. We’ve a first-rate dissenter, who does a mite of good, people say; and we’ve a first-rate man at St. Martin’s, who does preach as if he meant it, though he can’t abide dissenters, do you see; and we’ve a very good man, an uncommon nice old gentleman, at St. Edward’s, who’d preach very much better if he worn’t near-sighted, and didn’t lose his place so often.”

“Who’s at St. Martin’s?”

“Mr. Alland; I daresay you’ve heard of him in London.”

“Why should I hear of him in the Great City?” the man asked, melodramatically; “hasn’t the Great City enough to do with its own worldlings and starvelings, their fame and their infamy, without troubling itself with the cleverness of people down here.”

“Mr. Alland writes books.”

“*Non scribit, cujus carmina nemo legit,*” muttered the traveller.

"Oh! you're a foreigner," said the man in disgust; "it's no good trying to make you understand."

"I understand, my good fellow," said he; "it's all plain enough. Mr. Alland writes books, dreary straw-splitting works, that find their way to London, and are full of research and rubbish. Your rector of Chipnam is a mighty clever man, groping in an eternal darkness for the light that can never dawn there. I have heard of him."

"I knew it!" said the man, triumphantly.

"And I've come a hundred miles to hear his sermon to-night."

"Oh! that's a——"

"Dip from the well undefiled, my railway Cerberus," added the other, taking his hands from his pockets for the first time, and pulling his hat a little more forward, preparatory to departure; "you're quite right. We have heard of Mr. Alland in London; he's a very clever, learned, critical man, but then he comes from a clever stock. His father was a learned man, and brought him up in the way

he should go—and now he goes with a vengeance! Good evening.”

“Good evening.” He had a great mind to add “sir,”—the man’s manner had impressed him so much—but the hat was exceedingly shabby, and there was an inch of fringe round the bottoms of his trousers. Only a third-class passenger too, and he never *had* “sir’d” any of that kind of cattle. Besides, he wasn’t quite certain the man had not been “chaffing” him—come a hundred miles to hear a sermon—that was a trifle too strong, at any rate!

The traveller entered the town, and the first public-house in his way, where he took something “neat” in a wine-glass, complained of the quality, defrayed the expense, and passed into the street again. He hurried in an upward direction, in lieu of the route Robert Bayford had chosen half an hour before him, keeping close to the shop fronts, instead of taking to the middle of the road, as the first-class passenger had done. He did not care to attract any undue attention from the few loiterers about, but crept along quietly and

noiselessly, with his hands thrust to the depths of his pockets once more.

The organ of St. Martin's church was pealing forth as he passed the gates and stood in the old grave-yard; there was choral-singing inside, and the choir had evidently been trained well, for there was real harmony welling forth into the night air.

"Is it Mr. Alland's preaching, or Mr. Alland's choir, that fills this tumble-down edifice, I wonder?" said the man, with a sneer, as he peered into the church. He seemed of a lurking disposition, that could do nothing openly, for he waited his opportunity and slid silently through the doors into the church, dropping into a vacant place in the free seats, which he had marked out before making his entry.

Old St. Martin's Church boasted a full attendance; there was not a vacant space in the comfortable, well-lined pews on either side; the Reverend Frederick Alland was evidently a popular man. The man who had come a hundred miles to hear him, sat and gazed at the chequered marble pavement as

the rector ascended the pulpit to preach his evening sermon; he betrayed no curiosity, just then, to see as well as hear.

And yet the Reverend Frederick Alland deserved more than a passing glance. He was a tall man, spare of form for his height, with a face singularly pale, and singularly striking in its intensity of thought. A face that a casual observer would have felt to be expressive of a high order of intelligence—that would have been remarkable in a crowd as the face of a clever man. His light hair was brushed back from his forehead and behind his ears, in a manner that would have been somewhat girlish in any one else, but that seemed to render his countenance more clear and striking. A handsome face there was no doubt, chiselled by nature a little too sharply about the nose and lips. In a monkish garb, he would have looked a keen, far-seeing disciple of Loyola.

And his sermon—did it satisfy the man who had come so far to listen to it? You could not tell from the man's expression of features—he was attentive; there was a criti-

cal look in his eyes ; two thin white hands were clasped round one knee, which he nursed tenderly, but there was no animation in the listener. He might have been studying a curious specimen of natural history under the microscope, for any excitement he evinced. Still, to do him justice, there was not a great deal in the sermon to excite an auditor ; it was a fine sermon, admirably and gracefully delivered, the right word always in the right place, eloquent if not forcible. It was moreover an interesting sermon to a mixed audience ; touched on the miracles, analyzed and expounded, sifted, weighed, and suggested fifty methods of accounting for them, any but the plain, simple way which the Bible intended—nothing of doubt expressed, only implied by a mass of erudition and hard gleaning from a hundred books ; no scepticism intended to be conveyed to the minds of his listeners, only a desire to evince his own knowledge and show how much light he could throw on any Bible mystery.

A sermon interesting in the extreme, ab-

sorbing the attention of his congregation, and answering its object in demonstrating the learning of its deliverer, but still hardly the sermon to strike home to sinners, and make them better and more humble Christians.

The traveller had arrived at an inopportune period, and found Mr. Alland in a critical mood. There were times—if they were becoming still more few and far between, still there *were* times—when he spoke more after the fashion of the Vale Street dissenter, and dealt with human hearts instead of Bible problems ; sought to probe to the depths of the former in lieu of the latter, and poured from that pulpit a stream of eloquence and power that carried all before it, and taught men the weakness, wilfulness, and blindness of their erring natures.

The sermon was over ; people were streaming out of church ; one or two of the Chipnam folk were expatiating on the preacher's cleverness as they went into the churchyard together. The traveller went out with the rest, after asking a question of the pew-opener, a man who wore a flowing black robe like the verger of a cathedral. He crossed the road and lingered about

the church till the congregation had drifted down the High Street, and the charity school children had been filed off in twos after them. When the rector came forth, which he did at last with a sharp ringing tread that made the place echo again, the man retreated into the shadow of an opposite doorway and watched his departure; slid out from his retreat and followed him a little distance out of the town—about the same distance from his church as the dissenter's cottage had been from Vale Street Chapel.

A handsome villa on the high road, of modern construction, with an imposing portico over the front door, and the last gas lamp of Chipnam burning over the front gates. Under this gas lamp the traveller and the rector met. The traveller had increased his pace and come up with the clergyman, as he stood with his hand upon the lock of his own gate.

“Good evening, reverend sir.”

The rector of St. Martin's looked straight towards this man, and started a little at his sudden appearance at his side.



“You here!” he said in a low voice.

“Who has a greater right?”

“No one—come in.”

## CHAPTER III.

## THE RECTOR OF CHIPNAM.

THE rector opened the front door by means of a latch-key, and led the way to the extremity of the passage, through another door into a spacious library. The gas was burning feebly when he entered; at his touch it brightened up, and made the man who followed him less presentable in such society and in such a place.

“Take a seat,” said the rector, removing his hat, an action imitated by his more humble companion. “I am sorry to see you here to-night.”

“That’s frank, at any rate.”

"I am not in the habit of disguising my feelings," said the rector; "frankly and freely let me say your presence gives me pain."

The man crossed one leg over another, and glanced in a somewhat supercilious manner at the rector.

"Frankly, my dear Frederick, let me assure you in my turn that I had no idea of affording you any pleasure by my visit. The time for you and me to experience any gratification in each other's society died out—how many years ago shall we say?"

"Why ask me?"

"It may be a curious problem for the world to solve some day. Given—a father and an only son, brought up together till the father's pride in his son's ability places the son at college, and lays the groundwork of his future fame—to find what mystery, curse, or weakness set them so far apart as to lead to the son's avowal that it is painful to meet the father's face. This son learned in the Scriptures, who follows all the commandments but the fifth—this grateful son of mine—

‘ sharper than a serpent’s tooth ’ to sting me in my friendless dotage !”

The man spoke with but little warmth, however. There was more of satire than indignation in his tones. He delivered his withering reproof on his son’s ingratitude with his hands in his pockets, and his keen grey eyes glinting in their old furtive manner from under his penthouse brow.

The rector coloured, and said a little impatiently,

“ I have heard all this before.”

“ Well, is it not a difficult problem to solve ?”

“ No, sir, no,” said the other impetuously ; “ to my own sorrow and your shame, I regret to say there is no mystery in our unnatural relationship. You are a scoffer at all that is right and good, at all that the Bible teaches. You became a spendthrift—shall I say a drunkard ?—before my term at college ended ; you left me to myself and my own efforts when a kind father’s counsels would have been everything to me. Your selfishness broke my poor mother’s heart on the day

I took her under my charge. You cast us both off, of your own free will. Why do you come back to disgrace me, and talk of the love and gratitude I owe you?"

"Simply because you have risen in the world, and I have not found it mine oyster, which I with my sword, or wits, can open. The living in which a college friend places you is a good one; your works—though I don't admire them myself—have a run amongst a certain class; gold is showering upon you as it fell upon Danaë the frail in the old times before your Bible ones—why do I come back to disgrace you, asks the rector of Chipnam, with a surprise indifferently well feigned?"

"You come back for money—I need not have asked."

"I come back for another chance!"

"To fail you, like the twenty chances you have had before and lost."

"Very possibly—all the energy of the Al-lands has fallen to the share of the last of the race. I have no energy, for I am old and world-worn—you are an Ithuriel, striding in

the midst of evil, and ever busy with your spear. Here is another reptile in your path—turn me into an angel of light, if you can !”

He laughed as he who warred with angels, and fell, might have laughed at the futile efforts of all godly men to crush out the evil in the world.

The young rector winced at the father’s boast in his own impregnability.

“ I have tried and failed, I have tried and failed,” he repeated; “ place yourself under my care and trust implicitly in me, and I will attempt the task once more.”

“ In the face of despair?”

“ Yes—if it must be.”

“ I will not subject you to so fruitless an undertaking.

‘ I am a heavy stone  
Roll’d up a hill by a weak child; I move  
A little up, and tumble back again.’ ”

“ No, no, you are the heavy stone thundering down into the abyss,” cried the rector, “ increasing in velocity as you descend, and hurrying swiftly, rapidly to ruin.”

“ Neatly turned, and an improvement, so

far as the comparison is concerned, on the quotation with which I was good enough to favour you. Well, such a stone, by the law of moral gravitation, there is no turning back—let me roll on, *mon fils!*”

“You spoke of another chance a moment since—what chance do you expect after this avowal?”

“A chance to keep from the workhouse.”

“It will not come to that,” was the muttered response.

“Not while the Reverend Frederick Alland grows popular and waxes fat. Speaking theoretically,” he added, with a glance at the slim proportions of his son; “for practically you carry as small an amount of flesh on your bones as though you had taken to hair shirts, or made a crucifix pincushion of that narrow chest of yours.”

“Tell me what you want, and——”

“Go?” concluded the other.

“I have no heart to offer you a home here. You, who disgraced your own, will have little consideration for mine.”

“Hard words.”

"You are devoid of feeling—you will not feel hurt by them."

"It is not good policy."

"What do you want?"

"Form your own conclusion; I spent my last sovereign to reach here to-night."

The rector opened a drawer in the library table at which he had been seated and drew forth a purse.

"I offered and you accepted a hundred a year from me," said the rector; "what have you done with your last quarter's money, forwarded the 25th of last month?"

"Spent it—that is sufficient."

"Are you a gambler?"

"A speculator now and then—sitting on the bank waiting for the 'tide in the affairs of men'—striking in by mistake sometimes, and getting but the cramp for my pains."

"I cannot rely on your word—you are false to it," said the rector, as though he were revolving something in his mind.

"I promised to keep away from you, lest I should disgrace your cloth—bringing the



sins of the father on the child, even before the pauper's hearse has

‘Rattled his bones over the stones.’

Well, I kept my promise as long as I could, till the fount ran dry, and no pumping in the world could bring the water of promise to the sun-light. Make it a hundred and fifty pounds a-year, and give me the extra fifty as a *douceur* on the spot, in the shape of a cheque on your estimable banker, or in notes if you are afraid of running your balance too close, and strike me dead if I ever trouble you again.”

“Silence!” almost shouted the son.

“*Pardon,*” he said, with the French accent, “I forgot the respect due to your profession. But you are singularly placed—unfortunately hampered by a vagabond father, and poor relatives are always an insufferable nuisance. I am a disgrace to you. Granted, granted, a hundred times; see the policy of removing me to a spot where ‘distance lends enchantment to the view.’”

“Yes,” said the rector thoughtfully, “you are better away from me.”

"To be sure," returned the other coolly; "your life is *sans peur et sans reproche*, and I should be but the smoked glass between a world of worshippers and your dazzling effulgency. You would lose half your brightness, for the world *will* see a man through his disreputable acquaintances. And there would be no balance to the credit account, for I should never repent—men and women of my years only repent in penny tracts."

"Need we prolong this interview?" asked the rector impatiently; "it is money you want; it is money I am prepared to give you."

He drew a note from his purse and passed it across the library table. The claw-like hands of the old man seized upon it.

"Twenty," he muttered, "I had hoped—"

"You will have no more," said the other firmly.

The father regarded his son with some surprise.

"You mistake me, sir—you mistake my character," said the rector; "I do not give it to you or allow myself to be imposed upon in this manner without an object to be gained on

my side. Money sets you apart from me, and you who scoff at all that is right and good are no companion—father though you be—for a preacher of God's word. But I am not a weak man—not likely to be your tool—not likely to submit to any further extortion. Spend your money to-morrow if you will, and come here to shame me and to disgrace yourself again; take up your quarters in this town, and act any part your distorted imagination may suggest, there will be no more help from me till Midsummer. Not one farthing more, as I'm a living man."

He looked very firm and hard as he returned his purse to the library drawer—there was no mistaking the expression on that face. The father looked away from the searching eyes that met his own; they were a trifle too much for him just then.

"You have nothing to offer me, after my long journey," he remarked in a tone less irritating.

"Nothing."

"I have travelled a hundred miles to-day."

"The inns are open—they will suit you better than this house."

"Aren't you afraid of my getting drunk?"

"It is not my business."

"Yet, 'There was a time'—as Edward says—when you preached terribly at my ruling passion, when your arguments formed a perfect encyclopedia of temperance advocacy."

"I failed."

"Well, a man don't care to be reminded of his failures. Water-drinking is bad for the constitution, and you know what Lebrun says."

"I neither know nor wish to know."

"He was a great writer, and he knew human nature, honest old Pigault. '*Un buveur*,' says he, '*a toujours le cœur excellent*.'"

The rector had risen, and was standing by the marble mantelpiece. To the shower of quotations which had fallen upon him during the interview he had paid no attention; the last remark alone brought an incipient stamp to his foot. This man, with his wretched philosophy and his narrow judgment of human nature, was an outrage on common-sense and

decency. He was his father, but he had no love for him. Between the father and all affection stood ever the past cruelty, and the present shame.

Mr. Alland senior had had "his say," and gained his ends; he had no inclination to stay any longer with the prim-faced young prig, who stood cloaked there in his self-righteousness. He should have liked, under other circumstances, to have alluded to the Reverend Frederick Alland's last new work on "Religious Fact v. Religious Theory," and have sneered at the hypercriticism and egotism therein; but the opportunity was not a good one, and the Reverend Frederick earnestly desired his departure. Besides, he had no wish to wound his son's feelings too deeply; in the depths of his stony heart there was a father's pride in his son's cleverness; he had been a clever man himself, people said, once, and it was pleasant to see the father's abilities shining again in the son's. People might have said old Alland's past misconduct, want of principle, and love of drink had always hindered him shining on his own account; but that fact did not strike him

very often. Perhaps it was sufficient to know that he might have been a clever man, if he had had but common patience and industry. Some people are contented with a very little.

He took his departure from the rector's house, and went to an inn as recommended. To the lowest inn in the town, or rather to a gin-shop situated out of the town, much patronized by the navvies, who were busy half-a-mile or so distant in the construction of a branch-line from Chipnam to Chingley. Here this man sat and drank the night away. He had hired a bed there, but when the shutters were closed on the red blinds, and the navvies locked out, he had sat till four in the morning, drinking and smoking in the tap-room. The landlord was a man after his own heart; a drinker and smoker of forty-navvy power. He kept his customer company by the tap-room fire, detailing the news of Chipnam, in which Mr. Alland senior seemed greatly interested.

Mr. Alland made many curious inquiries, not alone about his son, and his merits as a

preacher, but concerning a Mr. Robert Bayford, who had come down by the train at 6.15 yester evening. The host of "The Plough" knew nothing of a Mr. Robert Bayford, but could say a great deal of a certain Mr. James—"a good man, they say," remarked the host; "but a precious fellow to bother; interfering with the navvies and preaching to them on their own ground, and even trying to stop *his* custom. He hadn't heard him—he wasn't going to, if he knowed it!"

How long had he been a preacher at Chipnam? Four year or more. Wasn't his brother Robert known in Chipnam? Never heard on the name before. Were the Bayfords well-off? Well—middling; nothing much to complain of, he should think. How did the Reverend Frederick Alland like so energetic a neighbour? Oh! the rector hated him like pison, and he hated the rector, so that was all square. Parsons and dissenters never did agree—more especially in Chipnam. He, the host, minded many *rows* atween 'em. And who preached at St. Edward's? Oh! nobody of any account—nobody that any one cared for. A feller

that'd agree with anybody ! For his part, give him a man of sperrit !

Mr. Alland drank, smoked, and talked himself to sleep, in a corner till four o'clock; then after one effort to rouse him, and remind him that a bed was waiting, the host abandoned the attempt, turned out the gas and left the man asleep in the corner. He remained there till half-past five in the morning, when the inn maid roused him by unlocking the front door, and letting in a navvy with a tin can and a bundle, who had been seized with thirst on his way to the railway-cutting.

Mr. Alland had more spirits and water, and then set to work to studying the railway timetable hanging on the plastered wall. The host of "The Plough," who slept ill, and was a restless man, came and looked over his shoulder, and offered all the information necessary. Mr. Alland, who was a liberal man in his way, asked the host to join him in two more glasses of brandy and water before he departed, an offer with which the host complied drinking luck to the gentleman so liberal with his money.



Alland departed and reeled his way through the town towards the station. He had business in London ; he would be glad to reach London by an early train. Brandy and water, added to the spirit he had imbibed a few hours previously, clouded his faculties and made his steps falter. He went down the High Street with his hands in his pockets, and his hat tilted on to the bridge of his nose, a figure to be stared at by the early town's-folk. A some one whom nobody knew in that town,—set down for a tramp, or a rogue and a vagabond, making his way across country.

The navvies, all with their dinners in their handkerchiefs, and their tin cans swinging by their little fingers, stared at him ; the shop-boys ran across the street to look at him ; one tall gentleman of stalwart form, in a black coat and white neckcloth, stood and hesitated whether to address him or not : deciding at last in the negative, the man being drunk, and not open to reason. Out of the town, and close to the station, another man met him and looked hard into his face, passed him and then turned and followed him.

This last comer on the scene of our story was a wiry man with a grey moustache; his interest seemed awakened on the instant, and he watched the man enter the little station, ask for a third-class ticket, take up a great deal of time in defraying the expense thereof, and fumbling with his change—drop one shilling and some halfpence on the floor by way of a climax—finally proceed to the steep wooden flight of steps with the evident intention of taking a plunge head-foremost to the bottom.

“Take my arm, Alland,” said the man with the grey moustache.

The drunkard did so, and it was not till they had reached the platform and were waiting for the train, that he seemed to wake to the conviction of having a companion thrust upon him.

“And who the devil are you?” was the sudden query.

“It does not matter—you’re too drunk to recollect me.”

“I—I don’t know that.”

“What do you want in Chipnam?”

“What’s that to you?”

“We only want respectable people in Chipnam—you were always a disgrace to society. If you come here too often, there may be trouble in store for you. The world has not forgotten that old affair in Fleet Street.”

“Ha!—how’s that?”

But the new-comer had thrust him into a third-class compartment of the train, which had clattered up to the platform by this time, and before Alland could look round again, the back of the stranger was turned towards him and was receding slowly up the steps. Presently the new-comer was looking over the railway bridge where Alland had read his newspaper last evening; but Alland was near-sighted, and could make nothing out but an oddly-shaped straw hat with a black ribbon round it. It was all very strange, and the strangeness of the incident helped wonderfully to sober him as he was borne to London.

That old affair in Fleet Street!—Who was to know anything of *that* but himself? It was

an old affair, that he had prided himself upon almost forgetting.

What unpleasant memories some people had, to be sure !

## CHAPTER IV.

## A MEMBER OF THE FLOCK.

Two hours after the departure of Frederick Alland, senior, to London, Robert Bayford made his appearance in his brother's garden. The clock of St. Martin's, which was a sepulchral clock, that could be heard half over the county, was chiming the half-hour past eight, and Robert Bayford proceeded to wind up his watch, which had run down in the night, and set it according to Chipnam time. No matter that Chipnam time was always wrong; it was a habit of Robert Bayford to suit himself to present circumstances. Robert Bayford had descended to the parlour to find the house de-

serted by his brother and sister, and a bashful maid-servant busy therein arranging the breakfast table.

"What! have they all deserted the ship, Polly?" he exclaimed on entering.

"Mr. Bayford's out, sir."

"And Miss Bayford?"

"She's out, sir, too."

"Anything up at the old shop, Polly?"

"Eh, sir?"

The girl's lower jaw dropped, and her great blue eyes protruded to an unnatural extent. Robert Bayford laughed heartily at her amazement, and, without repeating the question, took up his hat and went into the garden.

A fair spring morning, of which early risers might well take advantage; the sun shining, the birds in the enjoyment of excellent health and spirits; no mists on the hill-tops, or clouds in the deep blue sky overhead.

Robert Bayford seemed to enjoy the day, and the scenery stretching before him; he squared his chest, put his arms behind him, and adopting a peculiar habit of his, which consisted in clutching his elbows with his

hands, walked about the garden, looking for buds on the standard roses, admiring the rose-tree that was carefully trained over the windows and the trellis-work of the porch ; wandering to the back of the house, where he found some bee-hives, and became interested in the bees ; strolling back again to the grass-plot, and probably revolving in his mind the extraordinary lateness of the breakfast hour. A handsome man was Robert Bayford—a man of six feet two at least, in whose dark-brown eyes there were thought and energy, and whose whole face was indicative of a frankness and genuineness that in a man's countenance is pleasant to meet. Any one of common observation could have guessed his character at a glance—he carried its salient points so plainly in his looks. A man who was neither a fool nor a knave—possibly a hasty man, if any wrong or attempt to deceive should increase the circulation of his blood—a man quick to seize an advantage, if it were a fair one, and to despise the chances in his way, if it led to the shame or the discomfort of others.

He was still promenading on the grass-plot, to which he appeared to have taken an extraordinary affection, when the latch of the gate clicked, and a stranger advanced towards him. Not quite a stranger either ; for Bayford, who never forgot faces, but had quite a photographic gallery of chance ones in his memory, recognized in the new-comer the fierce-looking, wiry-haired young man who had offered him a seat at Vale-street Chapel on the preceding evening.

"Where's Mr. Bayford?" he asked abruptly.

"That's a question I have been putting to myself this last half-hour."

"I want to see him."

"Exactly in my position—will you take a seat?"

And he pointed to an extremely damp garden-chair, that had not been patronized since the dry days of last summer.

"No—never mind—I haven't time to wait."

"Can I——"

Before Robert Bayford could finish his sen-



tence, the young man with the wiry hair walked sharply, almost rudely, away, and, *sans cérémonie*, took a dive into the passage of the house—the door of which was open—and disappeared.

Robert Bayford, still clutching his elbows behind him, and not at all put out by the brusqueness of the late speaker, wandered out of the gate into the country road, and looked towards the town.

He was engaged thus, when the fierce young man, with two or three skips, took his place by his side again.

“I can’t trust that girl to deliver a plain message,” he said, opening and shutting his hands in a fashion somewhat spasmodic; “she’s as near an idiot as ever I knew in my life.”

“Why don’t you write?”

“I haven’t the time—I must catch the train—I don’t work in this town. Mr. Bayford ought to keep a more sensible servant. It’s very annoying!”

“Ah!—yes,”—and Bayford, not admiring the young man’s manner or remarks, turned his back upon him, and sauntered down the

road. The young man laid his hand on his arm a moment afterwards, and held him unpleasantly tight.

"You're Mr. Bayford's brother?"

"Yes."

"I should have remarked the likeness before. I'm very stupid to-day."

"Something in the air, perhaps."

The young man knit his black eyebrows, and clenched his disengaged hand. Bayford noticed the movement, and began to speculate on the probability of a pugilistic skirmish before his very late breakfast. A most excitable young man this, and one who amused him somewhat.

"I don't like satirical people," remarked the stranger.

"We all have our likes and dislikes."

"Satire is like that barbarous weapon the sling—you launch your stone with a purpose, perhaps, and it falls short, or it goes beyond its object and strikes those for whom it was never intended. Christian men have something better to do, than seek to wound the feelings of their fellows, sir."

"*I never said I was a Christian!*" was the aggravating response.

"You are Mr. Bayford's borthor," said the other, relaxing the grip of his arm; "and yet a scoffer. You!"

"Have you any message that I can deliver to Mr. Bayford?" inquired Robert.

"Tell him that he is likely to have a visitor to-day—Chark of St. Edward's. He's pottering about with another absurd scheme, and Mr. Bayford had better be on his guard."

"What scheme?" was the quiet question.

"Lectures. Free lectures of an evening to the navvies and the working-classes."

"A most excellent scheme, but bad for the beer-shops. Are you a publican?"

"No, sir!" shouted the other, taking off his hat and clutching savagely a handful of his wiry hair.

"Why do you object to free lectures, then?"

Bayford was growing interested in this specimen of humanity. He stopped and regarded him attentively. The object of in-

terest stopped also, and, gathering force for his reply by taking a deep breath and then holding it till he became purple in the face, suddenly exploded with a force that, if it had left several fragments of him about the road and hedgebanks, would not have greatly astonished his companion.

"I *don't* object to free lectures—save when lectures are of free character, and likely to do harm," he cried, with a volubility very surprising, "when there's too much gabble about amusing the masses, and people hire dissolving view lanterns and other catch-penny trash of that kind, taking up honest people's time by silly experiments in electricity and galvanism, and egotistical narrations of their own idleness in foreign parts, and all that, sir—sliding in, perhaps, their own pernicious doctrines, under cover of amusement. I say it's wrong, sir. I say," with a sudden jump in the air that startled Bayford—"that it's very wrong—that there's an opportunity lost which may never be regained."

"What opportunity, Mr.——"

“Glade, sir—my name’s Glade. Perhaps you have heard of it?”

“Never!” was the solemn and decisive answer.

“Not in the world, sir—I was not speaking of the world, which is not my study, and which I have no desire to please. But your brother has doubtless alluded to me.”

“Not at present.”

“It’s of no consequence,” said Mr. Glade, dismissing the subject with an energetic action, that implied hurling an imaginary substance over the hedge, or into the next world. “You asked what opportunity. You, James Bayford’s brother, coolly ask me, in your benighted ignorance—what opportunity!”

“Ay.”

“It’s very remarkable,” and he regarded Bayford with a dubious expression. “It seems so inconsistent. What opportunity is lost, sir?” he elevated his voice at this juncture—“the blessed opportunity of converting our benighted fellow-creatures—telling them of the consequences of their sin and ignorance, and of the judgment that awaits them.”

“ Won’t Sunday do for that ? ”

“ They won’t come, sir, as we could wish ; and Sunday is not sufficient for the good work. Every day in the week, earnest men should be watchful and stirring. Let us have lectures—by all means, let us have lectures ; but let them be solid, instructive, and religious.”

“ One can have too much of all three qualifications, sir,” was the answer ; “ there are times and seasons for all things, and hard workers must be even amused—don’t sneer!—now and then.” James Bayford is strangely altered, if he be more of your opinion than mine.”

“ James Bayford is a well-meaning man, with a large heart, sir. But people have imposed upon him before to-day ; and will impose upon him again, if his best friends do not warn him in time.”

“ You have come in time, Mr. Glade,” said Bayford more politely, and with a pleasant smile that met with no response. Bayford forgave this man all his discourtesy, his austere notions, his high-pressure puritanism, for the good words he had bestowed on his brother. “ A man with a large heart,”—why, even this

fellow before him had seen the goodness and holiness of his brother's life.

"I have found him absent," said Glade in reply, "and cannot wait."

"I will deliver faithfully any message with which you may favour me."

"But your opinions ——"

"Have nothing to do with my fulfilment of a simple commission."

"Put him on his guard then, sir. Tell him that Chark—a churchman with the narrow views, and the love of forms and rules common to all churchmen—is agitating to start these lectures; has the insolence even to expect the co-operation of our minister; to hope, perhaps, that he will waste his time in amusing a number of ungodly men, who will go straight from the lecture-room to their haunts of sin and shame."

"He shall receive your message word for word."

"I don't know that I have anything more to say," he said, bringing a silver watch with an impetuous tug from the depths of his waist-

coat pocket; "he may see this in a different light to me ——"

"Very likely," interrupted Bayford.

"For there is a way of turning evil into good, by Mr. Bayford appearing as a lecturer, and then reminding the people of their sins, and their souls to be saved. If any one possess the power of touching their hardened hearts, he does."

"You advocate his luring the poor of the town to a lecture-room under false pretences. He might as well forge his name to a cheque," cried Bayford indignantly.

"Deliver my message, if you please, sir, —deliver my message. Mr. Chark is an insidious man, and ——"

"Pardon me, but Mr. Chark is a friend of mine."

"Of yours!"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you will not ——"

"I will be your faithful messenger."

Glade looked at his watch, and then thrust it passionately into his pocket. It was the



face of a man convulsed with rage that glared into Bayford's.

"Do you know what you've done, sir?" he cried fiercely.

"I have not the slightest idea."

"You have kept me here wrangling, and arguing, and disputing with you until I have lost the train, sir."

"There's time for you now to wait till my bro ——"

"There's no train till eleven, and it's eight miles away. I'll walk it at once. Time's money, sir, to one in my position, and you have robbed me—and more than me. I wish you good morning, sir."

And with another scowl at Bayford, Mr. Glade, at a rate of progression for which few, judging by his slight figure, would have given him credit, went rapidly along the road, away from the town.

"A curiosity," remarked the minister's brother, watching his receding figure—"a red-hot chapel-goer of the old school. Living and dying by his particular version of one universal creed, and thinking his narrow, stony,

briery way, the only path to heaven. I have known hundreds of such men," he added with a stamp of his foot, as though men like unto him were his abomination. He was still watching, when, to his surprise, Glade made a sudden dart to the right and ran up the green hill, spreading out his legs and arms, rapidly and in spider fashion, to obtain a fair purchase of the short grass. Glade was making a cut direct to a narrow bridle-path that ran between two of the Chipnam hills. On this bridle-path Bayford suddenly observed his brother descending.

"Glade won't trust me!" he said, with a laugh, "he will deliver his message himself, and still further keep the breakfast in the back-ground. There, he is at it already!"

Glade had reached the dissenting minister, and was "at it," as Robert Bayford had asserted. His rapid walk, followed by his still more rapid run, appeared not to have affected his breath or his powers of elocution, for Bayford could see his head jerking backwards and forwards in his excitement, and his right arm, then his left, and then both flying into

the air like danger signals worked by a maniacal guard. Then James Bayford became a little excited in his turn, and flung out his arms with a little less impetuosity, caught at Glade's button-hole, and tapped him once or twice on the shoulder; then it became Glade's turn again, and out went the arms and even the legs, and the murmur of their voices in excited moments reached the amused watcher in the country road. It was a long argument, and embraced many heads; at any rate, the Reverend James Bayford had his own opinion on the lectures, and wished to express it, and both were getting excited up there, with the cool wind of the upper ground blowing about their black coat-tails. They came down the bridle path together at last, still talking and gesticulating—parted when they reached the high road, after shaking hands—stopped to exchange a few words at the top of their lungs at twenty yards distant, and then Glade took to running away, and the minister at a smart pace to approach the spot where his brother was standing a witness of the scene.

“Good morning, Robert.”

“Good morning, Jemmy.”

They shook hands, Robert linked his arm in that of his brother, and they both walked the rest of the way home together. Side by side thus, in the bright sunlight, they were strangely alike, even for brothers. Almost the same height, the same powerful build, with the same concentrativeness, earnestness, or frankness,—which you will—plainly apparent on the face, and stamping the wearers honest, thoughtful men. The only perceptible difference between the two was a deeper, possibly a darker shade of thought visible on the countenance of the younger, which, allied to a pallid complexion that offered no small contrast to the bronzed, healthful face beside it, would have suggested to most observers that the dissenting minister was the elder of the two.

“You are an early riser, Jemmy. That old objectionable habit!”

“Or rather the habit which a certain lazy brother of mine always objected to,” said the minister, laughing,

"Ay—that's put more fairly."

"How long have you been up?"

"Three quarters of an hour or more—getting an appetite for the breakfast so long in making an appearance, Jemmy."

"Not breakfasted?" exclaimed the dissenter.

"That is the state of the case. I understood that you had not breakfasted yourself."

"Oh! yes, some hours ago at the cottage of a sick member of my flock, among the hills there."

"And Susan?"

"I have not seen her this morning. She was away before me."

"What a flitting race you are! Why did you not tell me last night that you were all going to vanish away with the early dawn?"

"She and I find plenty to do to keep our flock together. There are those who will stray from the fold, and we must be ever watching for them."

"You appear somewhat energetic here."

"I hope we are, Robert."

"I had the pleasure of encountering a specimen of your flock a few moments since. A fierce-looking, putty-faced, black-haired young gentleman, who, if he possess all the angelic qualities of his sect, certainly belies his looks."

"You met one of my best specimens, Robert. An earnest and a hard-working man, who is not ashamed of his religious feelings."

"Oh! no. He made a very good show of *them*."

"Unintentionally, impulsively—I am sure," was the hasty addition of his brother.

"Well, possibly. He asked me to deliver you a message, but he delivered it himself after all, I believe."

"About the lectures?"

"Yes."

The minister tried to look grave beneath the comical glance of his more worldly brother, screwed his lips close, looked away, finally broke into a hearty laugh, in which Robert Bayford joined.

"Josiah Glade has his own peculiar notions,

certainly," remarked the minister—"a strict dissenter, and perhaps just a little too narrow in his ideas."

"It strikes me that he's——"

"Don't judge him, Robert," interrupted the minister, "on so short an acquaintance, it would be hardly fair. Will you not take my word for it, that there's the ring of the true metal in my somewhat eccentric friend?"

"To be sure; let the metal make as unpleasant a ring in my ears, as it will. You and I by this time should be judges of sterling coin."

"I hope we are, Bob—with all my heart—I hope we are."

He spoke as if he doubted his elder brother's capacity more than his own—as if in the brother's estimate of human nature there was something wrong which was beyond human power to set right—in which that brother might even be deceived. He called him by the boy's old name, as Robert called him still, despite his age and office. The elder brother glanced towards him

keenly. However, no explanation was offered or asked; and the moment afterwards they were standing in the breakfast-parlour.

"Sit down to breakfast, Robert, and let me atone for my neglect, by seeing to your creature comforts," he said.

"I ought to have known I might have helped myself in this house," said Robert, with a laugh.

"Well, we did not stand much upon ceremony in the old mother's days."

"Ah! in the old mother's days. What comrades and brothers-in-arms we were then, Jemmy!"

Almost instinctively these two powerful men reached forward across the table, and clasped hands — there was the affection of the old days in the faces of both men, whom years and different pursuits had kept apart for many years.

At this moment a tall young woman, with a resemblance to both brothers, entered the room, and completed the Bayford family.



## CHAPTER V.

## BROTHERS AND SISTER.

SUSAN BAYFORD was as tall for a woman, as her brothers were for the opposite sex. A tall, brown-haired, hazel-eyed woman, with a sad, even an austere, expression of countenance. The features were more sharp and angular than those of her brothers ; and the lips were all her own—thin, red lips, that closed tightly together like the clasp of a purse. Evidently a young woman, with the power to endure and suffer, and say nothing, if ever occasion necessitated that unpleasant condition of things.

It was the first meeting between her and

Robert; her brother took her in his arms, and kissed her heartily. She had not been visible on the brother's return from chapel last night, and she had departed early in the morning, on one of those numerous missions which she considered lay in her usual everyday round. She was the junior of James by fourteen months; but she had been the mother to both these young men when their mother died some years ago. They had been very poor at that time. Bayford senior had been an unlucky man all his life; and perhaps the cares of housekeeping, and the custody of her brothers, had made Susan more grave and thoughtful than her years warranted. Certainly she was very grave and thoughtful for a woman in her six-and-twentieth year; and her face did not brighten very much, even at the sight of one who was dear to her. With Susan Bayford it was ever a virtue to repress all emotion.

"I am glad to see you, Robert," she said quietly, when he released her from his embrace, and she had somewhat coldly returned his salutation.

"I have been telling Jemmy, it's like the old times again, Susan," he said, reseating himself. "It don't seem so many years ago since we three said good-bye last, and I went away to India. Yet we have altered terribly."

"Terribly!" repeated his sister.

"Time has made ravages in our midst. You have lost a great deal of your old brightness, and I think I miss the light step, Susan. And as for Jemmy—why, he had a colour that beat mine into fits, until he preached it all away."

"It's absence does not affect me," remarked the minister.

"I want to know all about this preaching dodge—avocation," he added, correcting himself; "what made you take to it, and drop down here amidst the Chipnam hills. And I want to tell you all about my life and progress, and the friends and enemies I have made. I am anxious to ask a great many questions, and to have a great many questions asked me."

"You arrived late last night, Robert," remarked his sister.

“By the 6.15 ——” he paused; his brother and sister were both looking at him—the former a little mournfully, the latter severely. There was no help for it, however, but to acknowledge the Sunday travelling in the best manner he could.

“Don’t look so alarmed,” he continued, “I was in a hurry to reach Chipnam, and I did not care to waste too much time in my dreary London hotel. You must forgive me my little *escapade*, and talk me out of my free notions—did I not make atonement in the hot chapel of Vale street?”

There was a lightness in his excuses that jarred a little unpleasantly on his hearers; they were both ultra-serious, and made no jest of that which, in their estimation, was akin to crime, if not a crime in itself. The brother was the first to shake off the clouds that appeared settling over the traveller’s head.

“You came from an outlandish part, Robert, and have acquired outlandish notions. Let us hope,” said he, “by God’s help, we shall have the power to make a Christian of you. Here is work for us, Susan.”

"Hard work," was the short response.

"We never shrunk from hard work—did we?"

"No."

The object of their future experiments sat at his breakfast, maintaining with some difficulty a stolid expression of countenance. It was rather amusing to hear brother and sister talking of him as something inanimate and without a will of his own—something to be experimentalized upon, and polished, and turned out a shining example, if he sat still long enough. He had his own idea of his future progress, and whither he was going, in the days lying beyond the present; he had his own ideas of good and evil—what was right and Christianlike, and what was grievously wrong,—and he was not a man to be a machine in anyone's hands. He had the affection of old times for both brother and sister, but he had worked his own way in life, and been his own master from too early an age to be influenced in any great degree by these honest country folk. He was a keen observer in his way, and saw the faults and failings that had

grown with them—the part and parcel of the creed, perhaps, to which they would bind him body and soul. Good people enough, but hardly his “sort” now—let him love them “ever so much!”

They talked together, those three, of the changes that had happened since their parting—we who take up the story at the later time need not dwell too long in this place upon the reminiscences of the Bayford family. Briefly let us say, so far as regards the dissenting minister, that he had been ever a student, and of a serious turn—that he had felt himself “called” to the pulpit, and had persevered, done much good, and been made preacher of Vale Street four years since. The Bayfords were all poor in the old days preceding Robert’s departure for India, we have said; the father’s business had proved a failure when they were all children, and it had been up-hill work to keep home together, after trouble had carried the head of the house to a premature grave. Now, James Bayford was comfortably off, in his way; content with his position in life, and happy therein; whilst Robert had shown

much practical knowledge of the world, grown rich in India, and had come home to marry and settle, true to an engagement made five years ago.

Concerning that engagement, Robert was very anxious to speak.

"You tell me very little of one I commended to your brotherly and sisterly care," said he, with the slightest tetchiness in his voice. "I had hoped to have heard by this time that you were Amy's best friends."

"We are so different in our ways," responded Susan; "we are chapel people, and your affianced is a church-goer, with a supreme contempt for our humble form of worship. Your brother James has now and then—very often, I may say—done his best to make our future relationship something in which the heart might join; but there is a distance—there is something more than a distance—between herself and us, her friends and ours."

"I am sorry to hear it," was the grave response. "Jemmy, you can explain this, perhaps. Has Amy offended our sister Susan?"

"I never take offence," replied Susan.

"What does it mean, Jemmy?"

"Nothing very serious, perhaps," said the minister, "save and except that there is no extraordinary evidence of affection between Susan and Amy, or between Amy and me. She is peculiarly situated, living with a clergyman of the Church of England, belonging to a sect which is apart from ours, and which can never possibly agree with ours."

"I don't know that," said Robert suddenly.

James looked surprised, but checked himself in a desire to argue the matter, if necessary, and went on with the original subject.

"Consequently the ground was rugged to work on for a beginning," he continued; "I tried my hardest—I try my hardest now—to understand her, love her for my brother's sake. But she don't admire dissenters, even objects, I think, to her guardian's views, and favours St. Martin's more than St. Edward's with her company. An impulsive, warm-hearted girl, who, I trust, will make you the best of wives, Robert, however much she may



separate you from us. And that we shall drift further apart some day, is one of my greatest fears."

"An idle fear, that need not disturb you much."

"You will become of the world worldly," was the lugubrious prophecy of his sister, sitting in the corner with her back to the light, as though the day's brightness was too much for her; "when you marry, she will influence you for the worse, turn you from the true road that our father and mother led us years ago."

"There are many true roads——"

"There are more false ones," quickly added his sister.

"He is an overwise man who says mine alone is the right one," said Robert Bayford, sturdily, "and all others lead to the gulf wherein the wicked so easily slip. And as for Amy,—the best of girls!—why, it puzzles me confoundedly to think you are no better friends than your words imply."

"I fear she is too young for you, Robert," continued his doleful sister.

"My opinion is that a man ought to be nine or ten years older than his wife."

"The engagement began too young."

"Not a bit of it," cried Robert, rapping the table with the blade of his knife, till his sister's eyes watched the operation with some alarm. She had a housewifely care in her table-cloths, and Robert was reckless with the cutlery.

"She was not sixteen quite," affirmed Susan.

"She knew her own mind," said Robert, exultingly, "and that is enough for me. I shall be ever proud of my fairy-like girl, and I fancy we shall not quarrel much, old as I am, or young and impulsive as she may be. I shall bring her back to tea with me to-night."

"We shall be very happy to welcome her to Vale Cottage," said his brother, but the sister was not quick enough in her response to please the lover.

"And you, Susan?"

"Will do my best to make her comfortable, and at her ease."

"No arguments, mind," said Robert; "you

appear to be all horribly argumentative in this part of the world."

"Talking of the world," said his brother James, "what is to be your future part in it? Do you retire from active life, and settle down in Chipnam?"

"I don't feel old enough to sit idle and let the little faculties I have, rust away with disuse," he said; "perhaps I shall start a little bank of mine down here."

"May the greed of gain not turn you away from thoughts of higher things," remarked his sister.

"I hope not," he said,—with a wry face, that he buried in his breakfast cup.

He had had enough of being preached at for one day; neither his brother nor his sister—more especially his sister—seemed to understand there was a time for preaching, and a time to let it alone, and leave a man and a sinner in peace. Possibly this was only the effervescence occasioned by the first meeting; and all would settle down comfortably in time. If they had only understood Amy Saville a little better!

"I confess that this is a disappointment," he said, when his brother and he were in the garden together at a later hour. "Knowing the natures of all three so well, I did hope to hear of a closer alliance between you."

"Pardon me, Robert," said his brother, "but how much time have you had to study the character of your intended wife?"

"Haven't I known her from a child? When her health necessitated her consignment to the care of her father's friend at Chipnam, had she not become a young woman ——"

"Scarcely sixteen, I think you said."

"A young woman, Jemmy," he asseverated — "one to steal a fellow's heart, before he knew it was slipping away from him. And she was slipping away from me at that time, too, going to England—possibly for good, certainly for many years—and it was my last chance; so I laid the groundwork for a bright-faced sister for you."

"Yes, yes—I know all this."

They had worked their way round to the bee-hives, before which they stopped, and where Robert Bayford put his hands behind him,

and clutched his elbows in his usual manner.

“ Well, and knowing all this, where are the congratulations, and the prophecies of my lasting happiness, which I thought you would make? You object to my bride—had you one more suitable for me, in *your* mind’s eye, Horatio?”

“ My dear Robert,” said the minister, laying his hand on his arm, “ a hundred thousand congratulations, if you wish them—if they are worth anything. You speak as if I were opposed to your marriage ; on the contrary, the marriage estate will be the best position in life for you, and cure you of all the old roving fits. But Susan has told you that Miss Saville has no great love for our cottage here, for our sectarian and simple ways, even for ourselves. We are friends perhaps, in the common acceptation of the term—nothing more or dearer. Still, I wish the engagement were to begin now, rather than to be ratified by a marriage ceremony. For I think——”

He hesitated, and the keen eyes of the brother were turned to him at once.

“Don’t stop, Jemmy; you were never afraid to speak out.”

The brother spoke out at once. Robert was right; throughout his pilgrimage, James Bayford had never flinched from speaking his mind. The truth, and the whole truth, however painful to his listeners, he had given voice to, and spared not. It was his calling to do so.

“I think, then”—he kept his hand upon his brother’s arm, as though to soften any words that might give pain to him—“that you did not act for the best, in seeking to bind so young a girl to an engagement. If you never made a false step in your life till then, you made it at that time. You were selfish in your love, and she was a mere school-girl whose fancy might be caught, and whose pride might be flattered, but whose knowledge of her own heart and its feelings was shallow. You bound her to you by the most sacred of ties, and then let her drift away, where your words could not reach her, or your counsel avail. You—a man of the world!”

“And you, Jemmy, a preacher, with an exalted idea of human nature, and a faith in things honest and true, would be the first to suggest a doubt of Amy’s love for me, perhaps of my love for her! I had faith; and the faith lives with me still, though it is five years since I bade her good-bye. Is our engagement to be severed, and Amy to own she is wearied of it, that you talk in so dismal a strain?”

“I am only talking of your past acts, Robert—of the folly of them,” said the minister. “As I have implied already, I know little of Amy Saville’s thoughts; and the future is ever a mystery. She is a ward of Mr. Chark, and she never visits our little chapel, where it must have struck her you might possibly desire to be married. You are a dissenter, and she is——”

“Of the church—churchy,” interrupted his brother with a laugh, which the minister thought a little out of place; “how very dreadful, if it were even quite true! One would think we were Catholic and Protestant at least.”

“Not so bad as that; but still look at the

errors in the church—its absurd forms and ceremonies—its shell of a religion, without the heart and heart's blood to give it life and keep it earnest. Its ——”

“Gently, my good sir, gently,” cried a cheery voice behind them—“surely chapel is too hard upon church, this fair spring morning.”

Both brothers turned from the beehives to face the speaker—a white-haired and amiable-looking old gentleman, with two kindly grey eyes twinkling at them through his gold-rimmed spectacles.

“It’s my opinion, and I’m not ashamed to express it,” said the dissenter.

“You have expressed it many times in the pulpit, Mr. Bayford, and set your congregation barking against mine,” was the dry response; “but then you are a powerful preacher, and I’m one with half a voice, and can’t always make myself heard. Besides, there’s the Reverend Frederick Alland, to fight the church battles, and attack you dissenters just as bitterly, and—you will pardon me—outrageously. Upon my word, though my church is small,



and my congregation infinitesimal, I think my doctrine is the best of the three."

"And yours?" asked Robert Bayford.

"Advocates peace on earth, and good-will amongst all men."

"You must be my old friend's friend, William Chark."

"Exactly."

"I'm Robert Bayford, late of Bombay."

"I'm delighted to see you at last, sir."

The guardian and lover of Amy Saville shook hands together heartily. The old gentleman appeared very glad to welcome the wanderer.

"Mr. Bayford," turning to the dissenter, "you must not dispute my right to call Robert Bayford my friend, however much you may object to my own particular doctrine."

"It is the doctrine that we are all anxious to inculcate, I hope."

"Ay—but we have some odd methods of teaching it, especially in Chipnam," was the quiet response, "and very little respect for each other's peculiar crotchets. Chapel rails at the church and its forms hereabouts; and

church looks down on chapel, and calls it deficient in dignity."

"And this only at Chipnam, Mr. Chark?" said Robert laughing.

"Hum—that's doubtful. Perhaps there *are* some unaccountable towns and cities wherein people differ at times."

"I have passed through one or two," said Robert.

"Do you know what one of your own sect—one of the most energetic of your own sect—said once, Mr. Bayford," asked the minister of St. Edward's.

"Where did he say it?"

"In his pulpit, to be sure."

"And you sat under him."

"I saw no particular objection—he was a great preacher and a good man, and I was anxious to learn the secret of his popularity."

"Well—what did he say?" asked Mr. James Bayford.

"That the walls which divide one sect from another, need not be run up so high that we cannot shake hands together over the top."

"I see why that man was popular," cried Robert Bayford.

"He was right," said his brother; "but each sect builds for itself, and there are stubborn architects in our midst. Mr. Chark, you are more liberal than I thought; shall we shake hands over the wall which was at least never very high between St. Edward's and Vale Street."

"We'll have a row or two more bricks down before we have done!" cried Mr. Chark shaking hands; "only a low wall between us, and with the broad heavens open to all. I have such an admirable scheme to start with!"

Robert and James Bayford immediately remembered Mr Glade's warning.

"Just listen to my plan, my dear sirs—give me your earnest attention, and let us discuss the matter on the grass-plot here. Don't walk me too fast," said he, placing himself between the two stalwart brothers and taking an arm of each, "for I'm short of limb, and still more short of breath, at the best of times."

## CHAPTER VI.

## ENLISTING.

WE need not take up our readers' time with any minute details of the Reverend William Chark's scheme to reduce the wall of prejudice between church and chapel folk. Mr. Glade has given us a hint concerning it, and we are as well prepared for its revelation as were the brothers Bayford.

We have merely to say, for the ultimate purpose of our tale, that the Reverend William Chark had been impressed by the hosts of idlers about town, and of the difficulty the working-classes appeared to experience in spending their time in anything but beer-

drinking, after working hours were over. It had suggested itself to him that free lectures on popular subjects, or readings from popular works, would be beneficial to the many, keep their money in their pockets, and themselves out of the beershops; and that these lectures and readings could be undertaken by a well-selected staff of the educated people of Chipnam. In this good work he desired to enlist all able members, irrespective of sect; to bring together as workers, to the one good end, church and chapel goers, even the rector of St. Martin's, and the minister of Vale Street Chapel—two gentlemen who, in his opinion, did more to build the wall up he was so anxious to demolish, than all the townsfolk of Chipnam put together. In bringing two such powerful leaders together for the common weal, he trusted good would evolve in more ways than one; they were both crotchety young men, with much good in their characters, and with much anxiety to do good, each in his way. And yet up to the present period, by their particular subjects of discourse on Sundays, and their particular

clinging to their own ideas, they had done more to split Chipnam into two hostile factions than politics or parish matters. Between them they had made it a red-hot religious little town; but of the peace and charity amongst men which the Reverend William Chark was anxious concerning, there were but very few, if any, specimens existent there.

The reader may think that Mr. Chark's influence might have had its weight; but then the little good he effected in the week, a sermon from one or the other next Sunday invariably demolished. And his own Sunday sermons unfortunately carried no weight with them. He was not a great preacher, or a powerful, or a clever one. His voice was against him; his memory was against him; his sight was against him. He preached the truest and the wisest sermons, but his voice did not fill the church; when he trusted to extempore speaking, he found himself stammering to explain his meaning; when he wrote his sermons he invariably lost his place, or found his eyes growing too dim to make

out the closely-written sheets of his manuscript. He had been a delicate youth, a weakly man; now at fifty years of age he was as feeble as men with thirty years more tacked on to their half century. His heart was all energy, but his bodily weakness was not in his favour; he was always striving to stem the tide of circumstances that set in against his efforts to make the world something better and purer than it was. His own particular friends knew his value, and estimated him correctly; but the upper world of Chipnam wanted powerful preaching and incessant rousing to a sense of their condition; and the lower, poorer world, ever hanging to the outskirts of the upper—and as selfish after its own fashion—received visits from Mr. Alland and Mr. Bayford, both of whom spoke as forcibly to the humbler members of their congregation, and were far more liberal with their money—Mr. Chark's income being very limited.

Upon the conclusion of the incumbent's relation of his plans, both brothers had their own opinions to express—James's, of course, taking the lead. He did not admire the ban-

ishment of the religious element altogether; he thought the good to follow these gatherings would be more evident if prayer and exhortation were liberally used; but then Mr. Chark thought that church people would object to chapel prayers, and, *vice versa*; and prayerless people would look upon it all as a trap to lure them together, and preach to them. Mr. Chark required, in the first instance, something amusing as well as instructive—"Teach a moral if you will, sir," he said, "but don't stand up and hit them too much over the head with it, especially as their heads are soft, and won't bear it."

James Bayford was always fond of argument, and was not inclined to give way in this instance; he fell in with the incumbent's views on the subject of the lectures—what the lectures were to be was the most important consideration. He had not the frantic prejudices of the hot-tempered Mr. Glade, but he did not possess the ductility of temperament which was so happy a characteristic of the incumbent of St. Edward's.

"Let me settle the matter," said Robert



Bayford, "by proposing the first subject for you, Jemmy. You shall tell them about the Holy Land,—it's a subject you used to bother me about when you were a boy; and if you don't make a sermon of it, why, it will please a mixed audience. Mr. Chark can choose his own subject, and I don't mind offering my services on 'Indian Life,' though it will be my first appearance on any platform, remember; and if I break down, who is to support my colossal proportions?"

"I don't mind lecturing on the Holy Land," reflected Mr. James Bayford.

"It's a bargain, my dear sir," said Mr. Chark; "I am glad you fall into my views."

"May I ask, sir, what subject Mr. Alland is likely to lecture upon?"

"Mr. Alland I shall see this evening."

"Oh! he has not heard your plans yet."

"Not yet."

"I am a little premature," murmured the dissenter; "Mr. Alland may object to—"

"My dear sir, surely, as general manager, you will leave the arrangements to me?"

“Certainly, Mr. Chark, but I—I wish you had gone to Mr. Alland first.”

The incumbent did not respond. There was a worldly pride in the dissenter’s remark, and a worldly fear that he had offered too willingly services which Mr. Alland might resent by withdrawing his own in consequence. However, it was a somewhat natural fear: Mr. Chark had his own doubts concerning Mr. Alland’s movements—but he let the matter pass and turned to other subjects before the dissenting minister should have time to alter his mind. He had a great opinion of the abilities of Mr. James Bayford, and was proud of having enlisted a man reputed to be stubborn and dogmatical. He was not going to lose him by too much maundering on a topic which he hastened to close.

“You shall hear more about it a few days hence, Mr. Bayford,” said he. “I will send you a list of all volunteers in the good cause. Now, to business of a nature more private, but I think still more interesting to the three of us. Mr. Bayford,” turning to the younger brother, “you will dine with me to-day?”

"I shall take a certain fair lady very much by surprise."

"Your letter has prepared Amy for your appearance one day in the week—if a trifle earlier, why, I suppose it's not for the young lady to object."

"I—I think I will return with you."

"What! without preparation of any kind for the shock?" said the incumbent, laughing.

"Amy will recover the alarm. I should like to surprise her," he said, with a boy's exultation; "to have a good look at her on the sly, before I spring into life and being from the mists of five years that have gathered between us. She must have altered very much?"

"God bless her!—yes."

"For the better, Mr. Chark. More beautiful and loving, more graceful and accomplished with every day that has passed. I have dreamt of such a day as this a hundred times. James," wheeling round with velocity; "I am going to dine with Mr. Chark."

"You make but a short stay with us, Robert."

"Under the circumstances I know you will excuse me. When your own time comes, Jemmy, you will understand my feelings so much better."

"My own time!"

The Reverend James Bayford could not refrain from laughing at this.

"Ay—why not?" cried his genial brother; "don't you think love attacks the heart of a dissenter sometimes—and are you going to keep heart-whole all your life?"

"Certainly."

"A most unpleasant and crabbed old uncle you'll make to my children, then," said Robert, "hard and knotty as some of your harshest sermons. Why, the sunshine of a man don't come out of him till he is happily married—and a wife, such as Amy for example, would improve the Reverend James Bayford wonderfully. I ask Mr. Chark to confirm my assertion?"

"I have been a bachelor all my life," said

Mr. Chark; "do you expect me to advocate the blessings of wedlock?"

"If you have not been happy in your single-blessedness, certainly."

"Happy enough in my own quiet way—happier I might have been, had it been willed so," he added, with a mournful cadence in his voice, that told of an old love story that had not ended the right way.

"So you will excuse me, Jemmy?" said the brother; "perhaps to-morrow I shall be all that is fraternal, by way of recompense."

"And your promise to bring Miss Saville to tea?"

"Oh! we shall not part with your brother to-day," said the incumbent; "Miss Saville is busy—dress-making with Miss Glade, I think—and there will be no luring her from home, I am certain."

"Pray, don't let us stand in the way of Miss Glade's dress-making," said a voice in the rear; and Miss Susan Bayford, equipped for a second expedition, made her appearance at this juncture.

"Ah! good morning, Miss Bayford, I hope you are well."

"Thank you—very well," was the response.

"And the dress-making is some holiday silk, I fancy, to do honour to the courting redivivus of Robert Bayford here," added the incumbent; "so we must not be too hard upon the lady."

"I am going into the town," she said to her brother, without heeding this remark; "have you any commands for me?"

"Not at present, Susan."

"I shall not see you again, Robert, I suppose."

"Well, not this evening, I fancy. Take care of Jemmy, and keep up his spirits. Our good friend here has persuaded him to deliver a lecture in the course of the ensuing month."

"James is easily persuaded, unfortunately." And with this Parthian dart the stolid young woman went out of the garden-gate, and briskly along the country road. James looked a little discomfited at the home-thrust,

possibly a little vexed at the free opinion expressed by his matter-of-fact sister. Easily persuaded!—he who was always hard to move, and prided himself on his stoicism. What made his sister so stern, and hard, and personal that morning? She was not always so.

“Shall we be going?” inquired the incumbent at last.

“If you please; brother Jemmy, this don’t look very rude—does it?”

“Only very natural, Robert,” returned his brother, with a smile.

“You will not be dull, all alone in this house, James?”

“Dull!—I have plenty to do.”

“If I might ask you to look in this evening, Mr. Bayford?” said Mr. Chark.

“Thank you—I have two sermons to prepare.”

“Already?”

“I preach at Atherby to-morrow morning. One day this week I wish to say a few words to the men at the railway cutting.”

“If I only had your energy,” sighed the

old gentleman; "if open-air preaching did not always give me a sore-throat!"

Mr. Chark and Mr. Robert Bayford went away arm-in-arm; the dissenting minister stood and watched their departure, and thought of Robert's courtship; how it had begun, what, in the future lying beyond, would be the end thereof.

"Have I been too hard upon his honest heart, his trusting nature?" he murmured; "or have I said too little, and concealed too much?"

What did he mean?



## CHAPTER VII.

## A MEETING.

THERE was life in Chipnam town, as the incumbent of St. Edward's, and the new friend he had made, wended their way through it towards the residence of the Reverend William Chark.

All the manufacturers of Chipnam cheese-cakes were sending out their boys to compete at the railway station for flying customers ; everybody was busy ; there was stirring life in the market-place ; there was a tarantula-like movement amongst the townsfolk, as they went briskly up and down the streets, or into shops, where shopkeepers as brisk as

they served them with the articles required. Nothing rusted idly in Chipnam town.

“An active little place,” commented Robert Bayford; “supporting two churches, one chapel, and, ye gods!” catching sight of a publisher’s office on their route, “a *Chipnam Gazette*, all to itself.”

“Yes, and a Chipnam publisher, who is rather a clever man in his way. If I had not the pleasure of your company just now, I would take this opportunity of gaining another volunteer.”

“Pray, do not let me stand between you and your good work. I can find my way to Merton Villa very easily.”

“And perhaps do not object to a *tête-à-tête* with Amy before the old gentleman arrives to spoil sport. Ah! but, my dear Bayford, there is a young lady-companion—dressmaker, or something—to sour your rejoicing this morning.”

“Never mind, I will dismiss her, *sans cérémonie*.”

“Meanwhile, I—yes, I think I will attack

Mr. Glade. Here he comes down the High-street, very handy to my purpose."

"An odd-looking publisher. An odd family the Glades, I should fancy."

"Rather odd, certainly. What made you think so?"

"I had the pleasure of a conversation with Glade junior this morning."

"Ah! a young man with very praiseworthy motives, and a very unpleasant habit of elucidating them in the worst possible manner. A member of your brother's congregation."

"Yes."

"A good young man with a bad temper. Some one—I forget whom—told me this morning that Josiah Glade was very much opposed to my lectures."

"He has expressed a slight objection to them, I know."

"It is lucky there is a diversity of opinion in the Glade family—each pulling for himself, or herself, without any regard for the unsteadiness of the family boat in consequence."

“And Glade senior, whose flock does he appertain to?”

“His son says the devil’s.”

“Oh!”

“But he’s a mild old black sheep, and one of the most amiable infidels I ever met with.”

“You should try to convert him.”

“Bless my soul! my dear sir,” ejaculated Mr. Chark, “the whole town is trying to convert him. Mr. Alland calls on him; your brother calls on him; I call on him; his son hammers at him in every spare moment; the editor of the *Chipnam Gazette*, who is the proprietor of the paper, and a High Churchman, tries to convert him—we’re all doing our best.”

“And the result?”

“Is trifling hitherto. We each think we have got him about once a week, and then he slides gracefully away again, and laughs at us in his sleeve, perhaps—I think it is very likely.”

The odd-looking publisher came up with those who were making him the subject of

conversation—a man of the middle height, with sleepy grey eyes, strangely at variance with a nose as sharp as an eagle's beak. He wore on his head an Italian-looking straw hat, which, as he raised it, disclosed a broad forehead, dotted over with bumps, as though some one had been hammering at it with a stick. His position in life was evidently not a high one. His coat was old, and frayed at the cuffs; and there was a greasiness about his sleeves and the knees of his trousers which suggested the idea of a glazier reduced in circumstances.

“Good morning, Mr. Chark. A fine morning to meet one of my best friends.”

“Best!”

“He is my best friend who worries me least. And I was born with a fine constitution for ease.”

He looked towards Robert Bayford, and, for some inexplicable reason, appeared to wince a little.

“Mr. Bayford?”

“That is my name. I have not the honour of remembering you.”

“Possibly not”—with a smile a little forced. “I merely observe a very striking likeness to your brother. An extraordinary likeness,” he muttered.

“For the present, good morning, Mr. Chark,” said Robert Bayford.

“Good morning—good morning.”

“What Bayford’s that?” Robert heard Mr. Glade inquire as he went on up the town; “Robert Bayford, the eldest son?”

“The elder brother of the minister of Vale-street Chapel.”

“Brother I should have said.”

Bayford was soon out of ear-shot, having taken a turn to the left towards the little church he had passed early in the evening of yesterday. He made some inquiry concerning Merton Villa of a labouring man he met trudging in the green lane, and had to turn away from the church again, and retrace his steps into the town, past the old church of St. Martin’s, and along the road that lay beyond, whereon we followed a less reputable character, a chapter or two prior to this.

Past the rectory, and standing in the sunshine, waiting for the next comer to afford him another clue to the mysteriously hidden Merton Villa. What ever made that affable old gentleman live so far away from his church, and hide himself and his ward from the general society of Chipnam?

He should not wonder if it were not that little white house perched up that thundering steep hill there! A nice walk it looked, up the stony path, with the mid-day sun blazing on a man all the way!

He would have climbed Mont Blanc to see his lady-love, and he was not a man to grumble at little difficulties in his route. Yet for all this, he did not care to toil up that precipitous path on the mere chance of the white house being Merton Villa; and he sought the shade of a full-leaved elm, and waited for the first-comer to offer further information.

The first-comer appeared down the path itself, after lingering at the gate of the distant cottage for a few minutes. That cottage must be three-quarters of a mile off at least; for the gentleman approaching had appeared a

little black spot up the height at first, talking to a little pink spot which had accompanied him down the garden path. Black spot raised a hat ; pink spot fluttered in-doors again, and Robert Bayford, in the friendly shadow of the elm, was left to watch the stranger's descent.

The stranger was some time in descending ; Bayford's keen eyes began to take stock of him as he advanced. For some unaccountable reason, Bayford felt an interest in this man, and a curiosity to have him close and scan him critically. He was not of a jealous temperament, or it might have been for the reason that he could see that the stranger advancing was a young man ; and if it were Merton Villa half-way to heaven up there, what did young men want there in the absence of its owner—young men who kept pink spots lingering at the garden gate ?

As the stranger came nearer, Robert marked that he was a tall man, in a white neckcloth and a black surtout, a very white-faced young man, with light hair, which he wore somewhat long for a minister.



"I'd lay a good sum in rupees that this dandy clergyman is the rector of St. Martin's," muttered Robert Bayford; adding rather irreverently a moment afterwards,

"Pooh! how this place runs over with clergymen! There must be some nice pickings hereabouts, to bring so many birds of a feather together."

The rector of St. Martin's—for it was he—was finally at the bottom of the hill; and observing Mr. Bayford step forward to meet him he waited courteously for his approach.

Robert Bayford touched the rim of his hat with his forefinger, in a somewhat free-and-easy manner, by way of salutation. The Reverend Frederick Alland raised his hat politely from his head. Alland was a tall man, but he was an inch or two less in height than Robert Bayford, and seemed to shrink still more in his slim proportions, when the other's broad chest and shoulders were on a level with him.

"May I ask, sir, if that be Merton Villa, the residence of the Reverend William Chark?"

"That is Merton Villa, sir," replied the clergyman; "but Mr. Chark is not within."

"I am aware of it. Thank you. Good morning."

Robert Bayford flipped his hat again; the Reverend Frederick Alland again raised his own; and those two men, whose lives were to cross each other's—in wild and various ways, for good and for evil—separated, little dreaming of the future events that were to throw them together and to hurl them apart. Each had been struck with the other, however, and each indulged in a muttered comment on the result of his observation.

"He looks like a man studying himself to death," murmured Bayford.

"A man to force his way through a difficulty and to go right or wrong as the humour seizes him," said Mr. Alland; "whoever does he remind me of so strongly."

He remembered presently, and gave a little energetic stamp with his foot.

"To be sure —— *that dissenter!*"

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE HEROINES OF THE STORY.

HOWEVER much Robert Bayford might object to walking up hill in the sunshine, there was something of his personal characteristic visible in his manner of progression. He had willed to do it—it was a task which lay before him, and he would finish that little piece of work as expeditiously as possible. It would have been more easy, and less fatiguing, to have taken his time, and rested by the way; to feel the cool winds on his heated forehead, from which he might have removed his hat an instant; but it was more expeditious to stride on, pull his hat firmly over his brows, and

march upwards resolutely, determinately, until his hand was on the wicket-gate of the villa and Chipnam town lay, like a brick-and-mortar bird's nest, in the valley beneath.

"It's all climbing in this part of the world," he said; "this is a worse pull-up than that ladder without end at Chipnam station."

He took his hat off for a moment now, cooled his forehead, put his hat on again, placed his arms behind, clasped his elbows, and took a good look at the villa which enclosed the object of his strong affection. A fair resting-place for any one but an infirm clergyman—smaller than Bayford had anticipated, judging from the distance at which he had last inspected it. A white house standing a yard or two apart from the path which wound its way up the hill to the breezy summit, where a sheep or two had collected, evidently interested in the new arrival. Bayford was full of life and animal spirits, for he flung a couple of stones at them for their impertinent curiosity, and sent the intruders to the right-about. Then he opened the gate which had closed with a spring, and went on up the gravelled path

between rows of sweet-Williams and wall-flowers. There was a bow-window on each side of the door ; at the bow-window to the left, which was open, and where the breeze was swelling out the muslin curtains, two ladies were sitting at needlework. Bayford's first impulse was to diverge from the path and step through the window, by way of agreeable surprise ; and though he smiled at the impulse, he checked himself and announced his presence in the usual manner, by a summons at the door. Five years ago since he was courting last, and then the maiden scarcely sixteen years of age. Time might have altered her, and rendered him, as country folk say, "past knowledge of." She was a woman whose character had formed now ; she might be quite staid and orderly, as befitted a clergyman's ward, and consider his abrupt appearance out of place and "bearish." He did not believe that she would be anything but what he had left her ; shy, impulsive, and light hearted, but for all that he would not chance it.

A neatly-dressed maid-servant responded to the summons.

"Miss Saville is within, I believe."

"Yes, sir."

"Will you present my card to her?"

"Yes, sir. Step in, sir, if you please."

Robert Bayford entered the hall; was shown into a little ante-room at the end, where he could just turn round, and wherein it was impossible to stand upright. The window opened on to a garden circumscribed as to space by the hill at the back, which started up behind the cottage, abrupt and rugged.

"Precious hot here in the summer time, with no wind blowing," commented Bayford; "that old Chark must be a bit of a lunatic, I'm inclined to think."

Bayford seated himself, stretched his long legs and arms, and ran his hand through his hair—dark chestnut hair, that curled in a decisive manner over his head, much to Bayford's horror, who detested curls, and whose life had been spent in trying to brush them straight—finally, and with a pardonable weakness under the circumstances, went to a glass over the mantelshelf, to make sure that he was not looking old and ugly, and had no blacks on his nose.

"She's a long while making her appearance," thought Bayford; "perhaps she's tidying her hair a bit. Poor girl, I hope she is not very nervous, after all these roving years. I wonder if her heart beats anything like mine—mine's only that confounded hill, though. My nerves, people used to tell me, were of iron, and would stand anything."

They would not stand the appearance of a young girl apparently, for he changed colour more than once when he fancied footsteps were approaching the door; and when the handle turned at last, he jumped with affright.

It was only the maid-servant who entered.

"If you please, sir, will you step this way?"

Oh! she was not coming to face him in that little gaol-like waiting-room; the maid-servant was leading the way to the door of the sitting-room, at the bow-window of which his keen eyes had detected two female figures sitting. *Two*. Would there be two now, he wondered? He hoped not, he prayed not—just for one moment to hold her to his heart, and see her timid face hide itself on his

broad chest. He had thought of such a meeting for five years; it had kept his heart pure and his love strong, and the world wherein he had been fortunate, from hardening him too much.

“Mr. Bayford.”

Two quick strides into the room—*two* figures in their old places by the window, rising from their chairs at his entrance—one that of a maiden in a pink morning dress, pale and trembling, and looking down at the carpet at her feet, but making no leap towards him, as she would have done five years ago! Well, she was a young woman now, and he had left her a laughing child—meetings such as his and hers, under circumstances that were akin to theirs, must possess more of pain than pleasure in the first conflicting instants, before the hands or the lips meet. Bayford very rapidly lessened the space between them, and held both hands towards her; she placed hers between them, but looked down still shyly. They trembled in his very much, and he could see her lips quivering. She was agitated, and he would spare her any extravagant exhibition of his



affection for her yet awhile. He turned rather an impatient glance towards the second young lady, who had considered it necessary to remain there, and make him look like a fool, he thought; and she, interpreting the glance in its correct sense, half rose to retire.

“Don’t go, Dorcas—you promised me not,” was the hasty exclamation of the affianced; and Dorcas remained, and Robert Bayford blessed her under his breath.

“This is my friend Miss Glade,” said Amy Saville, in a faint voice; “we have both been very busy at needlework this morning. Mr. Bayford—Miss Glade.”

Bayford acknowledged the introduction, but still held Amy’s hands in his.

“And this,” he said, “is my friend, Amy Saville, daughter of my old friend, who died in India, and blessed us both in dying—has she not a word of welcome for me?”

“I am very glad to see you home again, Mr. Bayford,” said Amy; “but you have surprised me, and will excuse my seeming want of courtesy. I—I have been far from well.”

"I am so sorry to hear that," said Bayford, suffering her to withdraw her hands from his ; "Mr. Chark did not tell me anything about it."

"He is a little forgetful," said Amy, with a faint smile, "and I do not trouble him with all my head-aches and heart-aches."

"Heart-aches ! That's an odd complaint for one so young."

Had she not said it with an instinctive leap of the words, as it were, he would have taken it as a compliment to himself ; the heart will ache when the loved one is separated by thousands of miles of sea and land—and possibly it *was* intended as a little hint for him to set his mind at ease. She was a young woman now—a new character, to the depths of which he could not sound all at once—and these were early times to begin the new life in store for them.

A moment afterwards he was seated, facing the window, and in the full light that streamed through it ; Amy Saville on his left, in the recess there by the curtains, Dorcas Glade on his right. Dorcas Glade, whom Amy had

been pleased to call her friend, and introduce to him as such ; who was a dressmaker—he had heard Mr. Chark say so only a little while ago—and yet a very quiet, self-possessed dressmaker, showing no embarrassment at his presence, no anxiety to withdraw now company had arrived, and take her confounded paper patterns and pincushion and strips of work into some other room remote from that one wherein she sat and marred everything.

Had Robert Bayford not been prejudiced, his thoughts would have taken a less rugged channel. It was an odd thought to creep into the mind of a man, after a glance at that slight yet well-formed figure, that bright, pretty face, with the soft brown eyes and hair. Dorcas Glade did not look one to mar any scene—home-like or otherwise—and, to take the reader into our confidence, it was very much against her wish that she remained there in the objectionable character of the third person who is no company ; she already regretted having promised to assume the part before Robert

Bayford's entrance. Still, he did not sit there with the intention of doing Dorcas Glade justice; and his gaze was directed far more intently to her opposite neighbour, the dark-haired, handsome young woman of one-and-twenty years of age.

How she had altered! Only five years ago, thought Robert, a slight, large-eyed, somewhat wan-faced girl; and now sitting there in all the majesty and loveliness of her ripe womanhood, a divinity to worship more than ever. She was somewhat pale that day. Her dark hair and eyes made her look paler than she really was, thought Robert; but she was very handsome, and, changed though she might be, he had fancied—he had been certain—she would grow up something like that.

The shock of his sudden coming in the midst of her daily life, although a little prepared for by the last letter he had written to her, must have been a severe one, to have affected her so much. As the ripples on the surface died away, and she displayed gradually more of calmness and self-possession, he could see how lady-like and graceful she had become.

There was evident a wounded pride at having given way so much at his appearance ; and an attempt, after a while, to assume a *hauteur* which became her well enough to offer itself as a trait of character which had not displayed itself in the early days, before England was known to her. So much the better, thought Bayford. She would make him a queenly wife, and he had always admired what the world called "a fine woman."

Half-an-hour after his arrival at Merton Villa, Amy Saville had recovered all her composure, and was "leading" the conversation. She spoke very rapidly and fluently concerning India and England, alluded to old friends and acquaintances she had left behind in the former country, shrinking not from the old ground she had trodden with him. *He was glad of that.*

She asked many questions of him, too ; and he spoke in his turn of life in India, of his voyage home, of the business he had transacted in London before he left for Chipnam. She listened with great intentness, and did not

fear now to raise her dark eyes and look steadily, almost searchingly, towards him.

Rather a cold, formal first meeting, Robert Bayford thought altogether; a fact to be attributed to Miss Glade, perched on the other side, and driving him mad with her monotonous stitching. These Glade people were sprouting up in all directions; it was very extraordinary that he was doomed to be haunted by them at every turn. This was the third of them that had crossed him that morning! He took a dislike to Miss Glade from that time forth. If she were to save his life to-morrow he should hardly feel polite enough to thank her for the compliment.

Why, he absolutely hated this Miss Glade, when his comprehensive glance had taken her in again! She was bending her head over her needlework and actually endeavouring to suppress a laugh. What the deuce had the girl found to laugh at?—her own peculiar position, working diligently and saying nothing, or the ridiculous figure he was cutting in her eyes, sitting there opposite his betrothed and compelled to talk of business, or of matter-of-

fact acquaintances, because she had been asked to stay there and render things uncomfortable? This girl had a keen sense of humour at objectionable periods, and the sooner she took it away with her to quarters remote, the better for all parties concerned. Amy was cool and collected enough to be left to herself now—could not this rosy-faced young needlewoman take a hint as well as any other creature of common understanding?

He was talking of the stretch of garden ground before the house, and suggesting that there must be a fine breeze there now the wind was freshening, when the Reverend William Chark, looking very warm and exhausted, made his appearance at the window.

“Help me in, Bayford, my dear fellow—I’m dead beat!”

He extended his arms in a helpless fashion towards Robert, who helped him through the open glass doors into the parlour. The Reverend William Chark tottered towards a sofa at the extremity of the room, and laid himself thereon full-length.

“I’m done up for the day, Mr. Bayford,”

he murmured, "there's no action, energy, or life in me till this time to-morrow. What a pity it is one cannot have a picturesque country without hills."

"Or one don't live at the bottom of the hills, instead of just at the top," added Robert Bayford drily.

"Or one hasn't the income to enable him to do so, my dear sir," concluded the Reverend William Chark.

"Do rents decrease here in proportion to the height you ascend?"

"Something like it, unless one lives in a street at the back of the town, down a blind alley, where the market-women after nightfall surreptitiously empty their *débris*. By the way, I must stop that," he said, sitting up with a briskness that showed all his energy had not quite deserted him, "or we shall have something nasty break out in the town."

"You have a fair view of a fine country up here," remarked Bayford, who had the heart of a gentleman to make the *amende honorable*, when he thought a chance word had unintentionally pained his listener, "I would not be



content to exchange it for a town settlement."

"It's a pretty look out," observed the incumbent; "but I overrated my strength—as I overrate everything, it's my weakness—and it's a place that keeps me a prisoner more often than my will consents to. Still the rent is very cheap, and my income from all sources is not quite a hundred and fifty pounds per annum."

Robert Bayford instinctively held his breath. He was a frank man himself, but the cool avowal of the exact amount of his income—a matter concerning which most of us do not care to discuss too closely—startled him, almost pained him. One hundred and fifty pounds per annum! he had spent as large a sum on a trinket for Amy, which he carried then very carelessly in the tail-pocket of his coat, and which he bided his time to present to her.

"Well, Amy, my dear," said the incumbent, shifting his position somewhat, to catch a glimpse of the fair face of his ward, "were you very much alarmed at the ghost-like appearance of our friend here?"

"Mr. Bayford took me a little by surprise."

“An impetuous young man, whom we shall have some trouble to keep in his place,” said the genial clergyman; “we must tie you down to rule and form, sir—we must tie you down.”

“My dear sir, I have been tied down unpleasantly tight as it is,” cried Bayford; “let me feel myself free for a little while, before you bind me to the strict rules of your establishment.”

Bayford felt he must speak out all that was in his mind;—the clergyman’s remarks encouraged it. Bayford spoke laughingly—treated the subject altogether as a pleasant jest: but the truth rang in its midst, and he intended it should.

The Reverend William Chark laughed in reply, but settled his gold-rimmed spectacles more firmly on his nose, as though to obtain a better view of his guest. He saw where the bit had galled, however, and said,

“Our rules will not hamper you much, Mr. Bayford. We are all friends together here, and draw not the reins unpleasantly tight. Have any visitors been, Amy, or any letters arrived?”

“ Mr. Alland was here a few minutes before Robert arrived.”

Robert Bayford's heart thrilled again. It was the first time that she had called him by his Christian name, and the formal “ Mr. Bayford ” had aggravated him more than he had given exhibition of to the world. He noticed that she coloured, even started, as the name escaped her lips ; but it was an augury of their coming relationship, significant of less restraint between them, and less watch and ward over the heart that betrayed her, just for once!

He was glad that Mr. Chark had returned—it made the place more like home to them, and there would be less of “ the order of dignity ” to stand upon from that hour forth.

“ Did you speak of the lectures, Amy ? ” Mr. Chark asked, following up Amy's reply.

“ Certainly not, uncle. Why should I forestall you in the pleasure of the revelation ? ”

“ Well, it is a pet scheme, and many thanks for leaving its details to me. But Mr. Alland said he would call in the evening, and thus I have missed him as usual.”

“ He called to say that he feared he could

not pay us a visit to-night, until an hour that he was sure would be too late for discussion."

"Didn't you say that the discussion was important, and I wouldn't mind the hour?"

"I said that you were not likely to be surprised at a late visit."

"Quite right, my dear. We are going on famously, and enlisting volunteers in every direction. Miss Glade, I met your father this morning."

"Indeed, sir."

"And I didn't make a volunteer of him, although my last remark might have implied as much," said the incumbent; "a funny man, my dear."

"A little eccentric, people say," Dorcas said somewhat sadly.

"He's such an aggravating man, my dear," he said, sitting up with a bump; "he smiles and listens to all that you have to say; his features soften, the force of your argument appears to be sinking into the innermost depth of his reflective system, and then—you haven't got him."

Dorcas laughed merrily at this. It was a

very fair sketch of her father's habitual manner—that manner which had tried the Glade family for many years.

“He agreed with all my ideas by nodding his head, whilst I explained them with great perspicacity; and then, by way of a wind up, he clinched the matter by taking quite an opposite view, and implying the scheme was nonsensical and utopical.”

“Then he declined to lecture, sir?”

“Yes.”

“It would have been a change for him,” murmured Dorcas; “and he sees so little change.”

“He offered to lecture on one condition—that was, if I would allow him to choose his subject, and not ask its nature till he made his appearance upon the platform; but,” looking grave, “that wouldn't do, even at the cost of losing the services of an intelligent man. Dorcas, my dear child, I leave your father in your hands. You have exerted your influence with him before now, to some effect.”

“Very seldom, sir.”

Presently she had risen to withdraw—when her withdrawal was not of the slightest consequence, thought Robert Bayford—and the incumbent had left the sofa and was standing near her, pressing her to stay to dinner.

“We are early dining folk up here on the hill, Miss Dorcas, and shall not put you out much.”

“No, thank you, sir,” responded the girl, with a flushed cheek; “father will miss his walk without me. Shall I come to-morrow, Miss Saville?”

“If you please, Dorcas.”

Dorcas Glade left the room, and Amy Saville followed her.

“Pardon me,” said the inquisitive Robert Bayford, “but that young woman—did you say that she was a dressmaker?”

“Yes.”

“Working for a living?”

“For the support of herself and family. The Glades are all hard workers—must earn some money by their united efforts, and yet are always meagre and impoverished. I never could make out the Glades exactly.”

"Is she—is she a friend of Amy's?" asked Robert.

"More of a friend to your sister Susan than to Amy, perhaps," replied Mr. Chark; "but still a friend. A friend to all who may be in trouble and distress; with ever a kind word to the afflicted, and a bright smile that makes their ailments more light. A sister of charity, in the true sense of the term, sir, and so a friend to all true-thinking people, belong they to church or to chapel. Had we fifty more like her in the town, it would not be such a jealous, irritable, *unsparing* little place."

"You don't like Chipnam?"

"Yes, I do, Mr. Bayford—only it puzzles me. We have plenty of preaching here, and *two* admirable preachers, who have something to say to their flocks out of the pulpit as well as in it; but the milk of human charity don't run very plentifully down the streets. We're a sensation town, and get up sensation topics. You would never guess the last one."

"No."

"That I—an old man of fifty odd years—was going to marry Dorcas Glade!"

Bayford laughed.

"You laugh. That's what Chipnam folk ought to have done," said Mr. Chark; "but the only people in the town who found amusement in the story were Dorcas Glade and I!"

"Well, you lived down the *esclandre*."

"Yes," with a dryness that was not without its humour, "we got over it."

Robert Bayford, meanwhile, had taken up the scissors which Amy had laid aside, and was idly opening and shutting them. There was in his face a thoughtfulness which struck the incumbent of St. Edward's as peculiar.

"Do you think Amy Saville has altered?" inquired Mr. Chark.

"Yes, I think so."

"For the better?"

"Possibly—certainly," was the quick answer. "But you press me too hard with your questions. I have had no opportunity of judging Amy yet awhile, my dear sir."

"I thought you looked a little dull."

"The fact is," said the plain-spoken Robert, snipping the air somewhat viciously with his



scissors, "I had pictured quite a fancy interview with Amy, and the result has hardly realized my expectations. I had forgotten something."

"Forgotten that the Amy Saville whom you parted with on board ship was no longer a school-girl, to be teased and romped with—to tease and to romp? Five years ago, remember, Mr. Bayford—and the five years which change a woman the most."

"You are right," responded Bayford. "I am hard to satisfy, and I have had no chance of a quiet talk with Amy about the old times—about the new times in store for her and me. Don't think I am a dissatisfied man, Mr. Chark. If there be anything under the sun I detest utterly and heartily, it is a man who cannot settle down peacefully to his place in the world."

Did he settle down peacefully to his own place therein, in the days that were ahead of him? *Was it peace?*

## CHAPTER IX.

## A PROMISE.

THE incumbent of St. Edward's was an early diner. He was an old-fashioned man, with many old-fashioned ways. He was an economic man also—dining at one p.m., saved the expense of luncheon, and the current of events rendered economy necessary.

A very plain dinner that day at Merton Villa, Robert Bayford being an unexpected guest, and coming in for the remains of the leg of mutton cooked yesterday. Cold mutton, followed by a baked rice pudding extemporized for the occasion, and for the benefit of Robert Bayford, who had abhorred rice

all his life, A cold dinner for this man who, by his own exertions, was well-to-do in the world, and who for many years had "fared sumptuously every day." And yet a dinner he did justice to, and would not have exchanged for a state banquet—Amy being by his side, and talking of old times in India again. He was a man, also, who had made up his mind to plain living when he came down to Chipnam;—reminiscences even of a bullet pudding, patent to the Bayford family (he had heard Susan speaking of it only that morning) had not deterred him from preferring his brother's cottage to the hotel in the town.

Take it altogether, it was not a day to be dissatisfied with; not a day to perplex with doubt one whose healthy nature was strong to resist suspicion, and cast it away from him. Mr. Chark was right; Amy was but a girl when he saw her last, and he had not allowed for the changes of five years. Girlhood is ever a transition state; fancies die out, and the realities of life make a deeper impression when twenty-one summers

are passed, and the "teens" are in perspective.

He was happy, for he saw that Amy had observed his surprise—perhaps his mortification—at the stateliness of their first meeting, and was doing her best to make amends for it. She spoke rather as to the old friend of her father's than the man who was to be her husband some day; but maidenly reticence necessitated that, and the days were early yet! It would have been strange indeed to have been particularly frigid, for she had sat on his knees when a child, and fallen asleep in his arms; had loved no one save her father so well as the manly, full-hearted Bombay merchant, who now at the age of one-and-thirty—not an old lover by any means—had come back to remind her of her word.

When Mr. Chark left them together in the afternoon for a little while, she betrayed at first some embarrassment, even cast a pitying glance towards her guardian—who found it convenient to be rather more near-sighted than usual just then. But Robert Bayford, who had seen the colour change, and the look

of incipient alarm, took his cue therefrom with all tact and judgment.

No conversation of a more tender nature ensued than that which had preceded the departure of the clergyman; Bayford spoke of the old times still, and as she was very anxious just then to know what had become of fifty different people whose names she had almost forgotten, Bayford entered into the required details, and had not completed the necessary information when Mr. Chark made his re-appearance.

What if there had been no love spoken and received during the half-hour of the incumbent's absence—no allusion to an old troth, and no plighting anew the words that should more solemnly bind heart to heart, life to life, —she was aware of the old promise, and she did not seek by a word to imply that she was tired of it? She expressed her confidence and her faith in him by sitting there his companion—in a few days the timidity would vanish, and the startled bird seek its rest closer to him. Thank God, there was not a doubt in his mind of the great happiness in

store. Looking at her then, he felt he loved her more than ever—and he did not fear that in her “heart of hearts” she valued him one jot the less. Why should he?

Early in the evening after tea, when they were alone together for a little while again—both admiring the sun going down behind the Chipnam hills in a sea of purple fire—he could not forbear one allusion to the motive which had brought him from his Indian home “for good.”

“This will be a fair spot to settle in, if you love the old place, and those belonging to it, Amy.”

Her face flushed, though her eyes did not flinch to meet his own. She knew by this time that such topics must inevitably rise to the surface, in the course of events hurrying on towards her.

“Yes,” she answered, slowly; “but you—you, Robert, will give me a little time to prepare for so great a change?”

“Have I not given you five years, Amy?” he said.

“Now you are home again, it seems so very

near. I am young still, and—and the thought bewilders me. I was only one-and-twenty last month, Mr. Bayford.”

“Don’t call me Mr. Bayford, Amy,” he said a little petulantly. “It’s a title that has jarred upon me more than once to-day. I don’t understand it. Fancy,” he said with a laugh, “my ever calling you Miss Saville!”

She smiled; it was a strange languid smile, he thought. He was becoming full of fancies, and he must shake them off. He never *would* make proper allowances for the novelty of her position.

“You must not consider me a tyrant lover, Amy—a haughty Bashaw, who will have no will but his own. If I say take your own time to ratify our old promise, will you thank me?”

“You are very kind,” she murmured.

“And you will not abuse my kindness too much, Amy?” he pleaded, with the earnestness of one ten years his junior; “remember all that my heart is set on, and all that I have looked forward to so long. Still, remember also that the time is in your own hands—one

month hence, two months, even three months, if you wish it, Amy."

The quick indrawing of her breath, the startled look towards him, he did not observe. Mr. Chark was behind him, and had laid his hand at the same time on Robert Bayford's arm.

"There go the navvies from work in troops to the beer-shops," said he, pointing down into the valley; "it is time we talked to them and interested them in something better than malt and hops."

"Jemmy preaches to them at the cutting one day this week."

"Jemmy?" repeated the incumbent; "do you mean——"

"Oh! yes: I mean the Reverend James Bayford. He is Jemmy to me; if I outrage his dignity a little by so familiar a name, it's the old home name I shall stick to."

"So he means to charge them at the cutting, and take them unawares. It's not a bad idea, and curiosity will induce many to listen. He is a powerful preacher, and will do some little good, with God's help. I have his energy at



my heart, sir," the old incumbent said, with a flushed cheek, "if I only had a quarter of his strength!"

"There's plenty of him," said Bayford; "and he's a young man whose turn it is to be strong, and make free use of his strength. I wish I were half as good as honest old Jemmy."

"If we could pare off a little of his sharp corners!" said Mr. Chark. "When he first came here, he was rather hard upon churchmen and church rites; I live in hopes of softening him down."

"Well, he is a little crotchety," added Bayford, "and he's plaguy fond of argument—always was from a child. But the Reverend Frederick Alland is rather hard on the dissenters in his turn, I have been led to believe."

"Well, he has his sharp corners too," said Mr. Chark, drily; "one of the best of men in his way—hard-working, energetic, and pious. We should excuse a great deal when we get a man of that kind among us. What say you, Amy?"

He turned, but Amy had left the garden,

passed through the open French casement into the house again. After a little while, the incumbent and Bayford followed her; the last red glow in the west died away, the stars shone out, the night shadows stole up the hill, the town in the valley beneath became specked irregularly with fire-dots.

The windows of the villa were closed, the oil lamp set on the table, and Amy was sitting at the piano with Robert Bayford watching her, when the rector of St. Martin's paid his second visit to the villa. He came in, and was formally introduced to the gentleman whom he had directed to Mr. Chark's early that morning; he shook hands with Amy and Mr. Chark, and took his place at the table, evidently a welcome guest there.

Robert Bayford was interested in this new comer. He felt Mr. Alland was his brother's rival in one sense of the word—a rival with him for the love and esteem of the townsfolk of Chipnam. Alland and James Bayford were leaders of the two great sects into which the townsfolk were split, each clever in himself, and powerful in his preaching, yet thinking but little of

the other's efforts, and possibly contemning them. Men of God, leading a holy and exemplary life, venturing the same road to the same great glorious end, and yet holding each other at arm's length, and thanking God he was not like unto that man!

Looking at his pale, earnest face, Bayford could but think he was a man who was wearing himself out; sitting there quietly, a figure in a home scene, one could fancy his soul was anxious to be gone again, to be stirring in some cause where much good could be effected. He was thinking of his plans for the morrow, or of the new chapter in the analytical book he thought of publishing in the autumn—one could see it in his face.

"My ward told you that I wished to discuss a little matter of importance with you, Alland," said the incumbent.

Mr. Alland woke up a little—yes, Miss Saville had informed him. That was the object of his second visit to Merton Villa.

"In all fairness I ought to have descended to the rectory," said Mr. Chark; "but the fact is, I have made the descent and ascent

once to-day, and in the second attempt I should have dropped by the way."

The rector smiled. Almost an effeminate expression when he smiled, telling of some gentleness and sweetness of disposition inherent in him. But then he so seldom smiled—the life before him was too earnest a task to think of smiling at.

"I have been thinking of the great number of labourers in this town, owing to the new branch line to Chingley. Of the increase of our poor, too, at the back of the market, and the little attention they pay to anything likely to elevate their thoughts or touch their hearts. You have remarked this."

"Certainly. It is an evil common to all towns and cities. The weak and erring ever outnumbering God's people."

"I have a capital idea, Alland."

"Not the first capital idea that my brother churchman has had," returned Alland with some warmth; "if your health keep you too much a prisoner here, still the brain works in the good cause. Can I assist you—take an active part in the working out of your plans?"

“Of course you can.”

The rector of St. Martin's brightened up, and began to evince more animation. These two churchmen had worked together six or seven years, and had had but minor points of difference. Lately there had been more argument between them, chiefly on the merits or demerits of the biblical criticism in Alland's works, which Mr. Chark made a point of reading, and differing with, to the author's suppressed dissatisfaction. Still Mr. Chark was a gentleman who argued mildly, and was soon lost in the fogs of discussion ; he thought of his best attack or defence when alone in his study, and the verbal opponent a mile and three quarters away.

Mr. Alland and Mr. Chark agreed very well together, for Mr. Chark was the reprovcr. If Mr. Chark had been in the wrong, or Mr. Alland had thought so, the incumbent of St. Edward's would have been scorched up with denunciations. Mr. Chark was a man of thought, and his physical weakness gave him time to mature those plans which men like

Alland could work out for him. And Chark's thoughts came direct from the heart.

Mr. Frederick Alland listened to the details of Mr. Chark's new scheme. He was interested in it; similar ideas had struck him himself, but he had been busy in many ways, and there had been much work to perform. He regarded it in its entirety as a good scheme; he did not appear so anxious to slide a sermon here and there into it as Mr. James Bayford had done.

He was content to wait; to be satisfied with small beginnings; to lure the men at least from the doors of beershops, and from lounging and fighting about the market-place.

"We can all work together for this end," concluded Mr. Chark; "my friend Mr. Bayford here has very kindly offered to give us some little sketch of his Indian experience, and our friend of Vale Street chapel will lecture on the Holy Land."

"Oh!"

The ejaculation escaped Mr. Alland in spite of him. The scheme on the instant became

less likely to succeed ; he could see sectarian prejudice riding rampant in its midst, sectarian craft sliding in under cover of a lecture, its own pernicious views of matters relating to the church.

Mr. Alland cooled on the instant. He was too much of a gentleman to object to the introduction of Mr. James Bayford on the committee in the presence of Mr. James Bayford's brother ; but it was an insuperable objection, nevertheless. He was sure no good could evolve therefrom. Had not this dissenter, with a rude eloquence that excited and carried away his hearers, done already much harm to the town ; had the town been quiet and peaceable since he had ascended the Vale Street pulpit, and attacked what he called " the cold formalities of the church ? " Could he, the Reverend Frederick Alland, rector of St. Martin's, side with a man who had been such an enemy to his church, who had spread dissent in the town, clashed with many schemes of his, attacked his own tenets right and left, and with the rudeness of an uncourteous adversary scrupled not to be personal.

Let the scheme proceed ; he wished it in his heart every success, but in that heart he had resolved to hold himself aloof from it. He did not think, just at that moment, that the dissenter "down town" might have entertained similar views, and yet have given way to them for the sake of the common good ; that he was a man with an excellent memory also, and could remember many attacks of Mr. Alland's, more polished, rapier-like thrusts at the doctrine of dissent, but still thrusts intended to stab to the death all that reared its head between Alland and his views on matters theological.

Mr. Chark continued to expatiate on the merits of his pet scheme, and, like a sensible man, took no heed of the change in his brother-clergyman's demeanour. He knew that the first impression would startle Mr. Alland, and he therefore gave him time to reflect on the matter, and for the common sense in his nature to rise to the surface again. He spoke of the good effect to be made on the town's-folk by the spectacle of church and chapel working together, with the



same earnestness as he had spoken that morning in the dissenter's garden.

Mr. Alland listened and made but few comments. Robert Bayford sitting opposite could see how the face had changed, and what a *steeliness* there was upon it. When Mr. Chark had exhausted all his eloquence, the rector of St. Martin's said, moodily :

"I wish you had alluded to this a few days since—I might have suggested one or two improvements, which are too late *now*."

"What improvements are they?"

"I will take another opportunity to mention them," he replied, evasively ; "there is plenty of time."

"No, sir—the time is now—the hour is now!" cried Mr. Chark, quite warmly ; "within a week from this date, the first lecture will be preached in the town-hall over the market-place."

"All your old energy, Mr. Chark," said Alland, smiling ; "well, it is a folly to let the grass grow under one's feet, when one's feet may be clogged in the upward progress to good. You are right, sir."

“And you will help us in this progress?”

“In one way or the other, I will certainly help.”

“I should like you to deliver the first lecture, Alland.”

This was a leading question, and the rector had been fencing with it to the best of his ability. But Chark was a man who broke through all feints by his home-thrusts!

Alland's lips closed more firmly together, and his grey eyes coldly and steadily encountered the gold-rimmed spectacles. The answer was on his lip when Amy, for the first time, broke in upon the discussion.

“I think, guardian, you are pressing Mr. Alland too closely. He has not had time to consider the question thoroughly—to consider the full effect of his declining or accepting a share in the instruction of the working-classes. I hope Mr. Alland will promise not to give us his answer for two days.”

“I cannot see that it requires much consideration,” said Mr. Chark; “what do you say, Mr. Bayford?”

“I do not know what I should say in Mr.

Alland's place," was the quick, almost sharp reply of Robert Bayford; "I might have a horror of dissenters, and a fear lest my cloth might suffer by association with them."

"I have no horror of dissenters, Mr. Bayford," Mr. Alland calmly remarked, "although I may have my own doubts as to the power of a dissenter to keep his sectarian prejudices from intruding on secular subjects. But I have not thought of this subject deeply—and Miss Saville's suggestion is the wisest I have hitherto listened to. I will give an answer in two days, sir."

"But—but—but—" began Mr. Chark in a state of excitement.

"I will give an answer in two days," the rector said very firmly; "and as following the topic might drift us into personalities"—this was a side-thrust at Bayford's minor explosion—"I propose we defer the discussion, and beg Miss Saville to favour us with some *morceaux* from her favourite Beethoven."

Amy Saville seemed glad to change the current of ideas; her cheek was flushed, and she was pleased with the result of her mediation. She turned to the piano at once, and

Alland—a Beethoven worshipper also—drew his chair closer to her music-stool, turned over the leaves of her music, and talked of the fragmentary strains that seemed to ripple off from her fingers.

Robert Bayford was no great lover of music, knew very little concerning it, and had very original ideas concerning Beethoven being one of the slowest and dreariest old parties that ever a man slept under. He could not discourse on Beethoven or his matchless symphonies, for symphonies had always tried his temper and affected his nervous system:—he left Amy to Mr. Alland, and made no pretence of discussing a subject he did not understand. If our friends and acquaintances who worry us to death with their triteness, would only follow Robert Bayford's example!

Bayford was a man who deserved to be happy in the object of his affections; he was not a jealous man, and placed implicit confidence in those he loved. Many men in his position would have felt an ugly spasm or two at the young clergyman taking his place so close to the affianced, and bearing her away to

a world of conversation all their own, and in which he could take no share. A handsome and clever man too—a man of whom the world talked and made much of.

Robert Bayford, however, was of a different stamp. Years ago he had won Amy Saville's love, and he had faith in the stability of that passion. His had undergone no change; till he was certain that it was founded on a rock and would endure all his life, he had made no sign. Now the fact was acknowledged, and with the love lying not far away in the shade, what had he to fear? He was not a boy, full of feverish whims to prey on his senses, and bewilder him; Amy was to be his wife, and there was nothing to trouble him.

And yet Robert Bayford was human. Once he *did* feel a slight spasm as Amy and the rector discussed with friendly warmth the rendering of some particular passage, and the rector struck a few notes himself and then looked laughingly at her; but it was only a spasm of regret that he had remained so long in India, and had returned too much a stranger to Amy, for her to be as friendly, or even as sisterly,

with him as with the rector of Chipnam. There was some old ground to go over before she would smile at him like that !

Still there was no jealousy, though he had not admired the few traits of character exhibited by that stern young man at the further end of the room ; though Mr. Alland's looks had expressed, if not a contempt, at least a decided objection to dissenters and their peculiarities. Robert Bayford was not a dissenter himself, perhaps—he did not know exactly how to define his own religious impressions—but he had faith in brother Jemmy's sense, uprightness and clear-sightedness, and he felt the sneer on Mr. Alland's lip had been out of place and ill-timed. He would go and hear this aristocratic-looking parson at St. Martin's—by Jove, he would back Jemmy against him in a fair stand-up sermon any day !

This incipient antagonism did not prevent Robert Bayford leaving with the rector ; or, perhaps, led him to select the time of the rector's departure for his own withdrawal ; it is difficult to say, judging by the conversation

that ensued as the two young men went down the hill-path together.

"Mr. Chark tells me," said Robert, going straight to the subject in his usual direct manner, "that this is an excitable little town. He implied that the thoughtful portions were rather at loggerheads with each other concerning religious matters, and the thoughtless as improvident and ignorant as in other towns less cared for by the ministers in their midst."

"Is he a fair judge?" was the quiet question put by Mr. Alland.

"He is a minister here—why should he not be?"

"He is a theorist to a certain extent; he judges a great deal by hearsay; his physical incapacity prevents him, in many instances, looking clearly into cases which have been exaggerated to him."

"He is wrong, then?"

"To a certain extent—not altogether."

"You approved of his plan of free lectures—at *first*."

"And at last. It contains the elements of

success. Managed with common care, good must infallibly follow."

"Exactly. Then, may I ask, Mr. Alland, not rudely, but frankly and honestly, whether you fear the services which my brother has offered in the good cause are likely to do harm to it?"

Mr. Alland hesitated for a little while. He was not accustomed to such open speaking. The question, however, was fairly responded to.

"Mr. Bayford, you are a stranger to this town. Mr. Chark is quite right in implying some difference of religious opinion between our townfolk at least. Your brother has considerable influence with a certain section thereof, and entertains views very different from mine. Candidly, then, at these lectures I fear he may express those views."

"I will answer for him."

"No one can answer for him, you will allow me to say," replied Alland, "when the excitement of the moment carries him away."

"Still, I will answer for him and his good



behaviour," said Robert Bayford, laughing ; " he shall expound no doctrine objectionable to the church. I pledge you my word as a gentleman."

" You understand your brother better than I, no doubt," was the somewhat cool remark here.

" Understand him !" echoed Bayford ; " my dear sir, if you understood him a little better, and he you, perhaps—I will grant that—it would be better for honest Chipnam. Yes, I understand him thoroughly—all the sterling worth of a heart that has not a selfish thought in it, and all the earnestness of a purpose that in the face of a hundred dangers would push on in God's name, and in God's cause, sir. When he was a boy, he was ever thinking of the interests of others—it is a thought which has grown with his growth, and will last to his death. Understand old Jemmy !"

The Reverend Frederick Alland smiled at the brother's enthusiasm, and was touched by it. This man at his side was of a hearty, unselfish nature, whose soul was in his brother ; a man with strong affections, that no storm

could uproot. And he could appreciate this brotherly love ; for he had yearned for it in his day—he, who was alone in the world, and had gained much esteem and fame, but no love. His opinion of Mr. Robert Bayford rose several degrees on the instant.

“ I have no doubt of the estimable qualities of Mr. James Bayford,” said Alland ; “ more—I have been a witness to much good effected by him amongst the members of his flock. I only distrust his zeal leading him to forget the object which may draw together a large number of persons. Perhaps he and I are both a trifle over-zealous.”

“ Well, it’s a good fault.”

“ And if he and I are to dispute over the nature of the lectures, or the opinions expressed therein, it would surely be better for the general weal for me to refrain from interfering with the management.”

“ Haven’t I answered for him ? Do you think James Bayford as pig-headed a being as young Glade ?” cried Robert, warmly.

Alland was a man of few smiles, but he laughed outright at this. He had some odd

reminiscences' concerning young Glade, who *was* pig-headed in some matters, at any rate.

"I wonder what he thinks of this scheme," said Alland.

"I have heard his opinion," said Bayford, joining in the laugh against the stanch dissenter. "He wants the screw on—the chapel to hold itself sternly aloof from the church."

"Well, the church will work with the chapel in this."

"Bravo! parson," cried Robert.

After a moment's reflection, he said,

"Amy Saville was right in checking that impulse of yours. Why, Mr. Alland, she reads you like a book."

"She is a thoughtful girl."

They did not discuss further the merits of Amy Saville. The rector's house was reached, and the two young men parted thereat, with a better opinion of each other than it was likely they could have entertained, considering the flashes of discord which had characterized the earlier period of their meeting.

Still, opinions change as the world goes round, and from the clouds that steal up in the night may flash the lightning again.

END OF BOOK THE FIRST.



## **BOOK II.**

**SUNKEN ROCKS.**



## CHAPTER I.

## THE GLADES.

THE Reverend Frederick Alland gave in his adhesion to the good cause on the Tuesday, twenty-four hours before the expiration of that promise he had made to Amy Saville. On the Thursday morning, the first notice of the future intentions of the thoughtful portion of the Chipnam community, appeared on the doors of the vestry-hall; was put in the shop windows of both church and chapel folk; was posted on the trunks of trees, and, by kind permission of the proprietors, on the oaken fence of a park paling within fifty yards of the railway cutting, where the navvies were busy; became the leading



topic of conversation amongst the towns-people for the remainder of the week.

Everybody had a great deal to say upon the subject ; as might have been naturally expected, it did not please everybody, or meet everybody's views. Church people could not see what Mr. James Bayford had to say upon the Holy Land that could amuse them ; chapel folk thought too much prominence was given to Mr. Alland's support of the scheme, and fancied that there was a shade of difference in the size of the type wherein his name was chronicled.

Josiah Glade, cabinet-maker, had perhaps more to say than most people. He was an excitable young man, who lived on public grievances. If he were not in hot water on points of theology, not arguing and disputing, and raking up disagreeable truths, and rubbing his hair the wrong way in his excitement, he was low-spirited, and " out of sorts." And here was a gigantic grievance to " buttonhole " a friend upon, and saw the air about. Here was a lack of zeal in his own sect, a general backsliding of everyone—lecturing and twad-

dling, in lieu of preaching the gospel in the highways—trying to amuse, instead of endeavouring to convert. Glade junior was a foreman in his master's employ, and the men who served under him heard enough of the topic during the next three days to last them all their lives.

He had been deceived in his own pastor, too—he was going to talk about the Holy Land, instead of the holy truths which sprung thence; he had condescended to join with Mr. Alland—a man not much better than a learned atheist—in a ridiculous scheme to elevate the minds of the masses. The minds of the brutal, scoffing vagabonds who hung about the market-places after work was over at the railway cutting. Why were not they preached to, and told about their sins, and warned of the consequences of their indulgences? Why wasn't some one continually preaching?

The final straw to this refractory camel's back was given by the order of his master to take a staff of six men to the town-hall, Chipnam, repair the platform, and superin-

tend the general arrangements. *Nolens volens*, here was a share in the work thrust upon him, and Josiah Glade set about it with a rueful countenance. Certes, he was an ill-tempered man, whom dissent had soured rather than rendered amiable. To have seen him proceeding home down the High Street the first day after his work, was to believe that a smile had never softened his face, or that a happy thought had never brightened it. He went on his way, muttering to the stones in the street, and turned into his father's house—the rooms above the publishing-office of the *Chipnam Gazette*—in a dogged and disconsolate manner.

“Well, where do you think I have been to-day, of all places?” he asked of the united family at the tea-table, as he lumped himself down in a chair by the window.

“To the skittle-ground?” guessed his father.

This was pleasant banter, to which no reply was deigned. Dorcas Glade thought further down the railway line on a special mission. Mrs. Glade—an ill-tempered old woman to

match her first-born,—gave it up at once, and told him somewhat bluntly not to beat about the bush, and make himself ridiculous.

An odd little party of four—those Glades. No similarity of feature amongst them, little similarity of pursuit—still less, barring the moodiness of mother and son, of traits of character. A more divided family, with fewer ideas in common, not to be found between the town of Chipnam and the great “London-town” one hundred miles away.

As these Glades have each a part in the future pages of this story, and affect the lives and fortunes of those characters already brought more prominently before the reader, we will not lose the present opportunity of formally introducing them.

Josiah Glade needs no more lengthened description—the lights and shades of his very decided character will develop themselves as we proceed, or the fault will be the author’s own. Broad lights and deep shadowing are in this Josiah Glade’s character; people who judged him too hastily by appearances found themselves deceived in the long-run. And to

do this dissenter justice, we have as yet only seen him at his worst.

Glade senior, or old Glade, as he was termed by the little boys of Chipnam town, sat in the arm-chair facing the light, his bumps, to which we have alluded, in bas-relief on his forehead, his eyes more sleepy-looking than ever, his nose more hooked and acute. Out in the world of Chipnam, we have seen that his exterior was of a seedy character ; at home in the bosom of his family, he was a shade more ragged and disreputable. He was not a man of a tidy turn of mind, and in this particular afforded a decided contrast to the son, who was neat in everything but his head of hair, or of bristles, or whatever the material might be. A clever man, and an industrious man, but fond of putting off his industry to the last moment, and then working like a steam-engine. A man who jogged on leisurely till driven by the force of events to work like no human and rational being. Three days of the week idle, and three working far into the night, when six days regular work would have answered the

purpose, excited him less, and saved the family less mental excitement. To sum him up—a man who objected to method, and took things easily whilst he could.

Mrs. Glade was older than her liege lord, thinner, more angular and lined. A sallow-faced old lady, who wore horn-rimmed spectacles, or magnifying-glasses, which gave her an owl-like appearance, and which may be remembered as focussing Robert Bayford, and rendering him uncomfortable on the night he strolled into Vale Street Chapel, and was inducted into the family pew of the Glades. A lady who was of a sensitive disposition, and inclined to sulks and “tantrums.” Three-fourths of her life had been spent in resenting Mr. Glade’s remarks, and maintaining periods of rigid silence of more or less duration, according to the nature of the offence. Herein she differed from her son, who spoke out his mind at once, and recovered his equanimity in a shorter space of time. Dorcas Glade, the good genius of the family, softening its rugged elements, and acting as a friend and mediator to all, we have seen at Merton Villa—what

the Glades would have been without her, it is difficult to say.

Hers had been an up-hill life, without her being aware of it ; such was the natural elasticity and invariable good temper of this maiden. Her life had been spent in throwing something like a halo of comfort and goodwill amidst her circle, and the task had been an easy one. Would it be an easy task all her life, or were there sterner lessons coming ?

In the great school the lessons are difficult at times, and we poor scholars grow despairing, or fight on and win the prize, or die in striving for it. There are so many of us ; the rivalry is so bitter and intense, and the prizes, after all, are only for the very clever, the very patient, self-denying, or the very, very lucky, who have those prizes thrust upon them, which no ability of theirs could by any possibility have gained.

The Glades may be called chapel-goers—albeit son and daughter were only regular attendants at Vale Street. Mrs. Glade had her ideas at times that Mr. James Bayford slighted her, even preached at her, when he talked of

the sins of unforgiveness and nursing wrongs; and would remove herself, tortoise-shell spectacles and all, to St. Martin's or St. Edward's, till something that hurt her feelings there sent her back to Vale Street. The rector of St. Martin's only three weeks ago had passed her in his hurry without saying "Good morning, Mrs. Glade,"—she who sat in the free seats close under his nose, too!—and if he slighted the poor members of his flock like *that*, she'd go back to Vale Street, and to her son's pew there—and the sooner the better. So Mrs. Glade patronized Vale Street at the period concerning which we treat.

Mr. Glade has been already characterized by Mr. Chark as an amiable old heathen; certainly he did little of a Sunday but lie in bed and read obtuse works on a variety of subjects—he was not particular. Still he was not a heathen; of an evening sometimes he would stroll into St. Edward's—only St. Edward's—and listen to the sermon, returning home to pick its literary merits to pieces, show where the flaw in the argument was, and where the verb did not agree with its nomina-



tive case—a species of criticism that carried his son beyond the due bounds of filial respect.

“I don’t like to hear it!” he would shout.

“Because you don’t understand it, my child,” Mr. Glade would observe. “Oh! what a pity my old business losses hindered me giving you a decent education.”

“We go to church to pray, not to criticize.”

“And to be prayed for, Josiah, in the Queen’s English, not in——”

Josiah would dash from the room and be seen no more till a late hour. Mr. Glade would settle a rusty velvet cap, he was partial to wearing, on his head, and proceed to smoke his favourite pipe—a short clay pipe of the usual pot-house description—with great ease and self-complacency.

Such is the outline necessary to be given of the different members of the Glade family ere we proceed. Divided by thought and feeling in many things, and yet bound together, not only by affection, but by one tie—to be presently alluded to—which rendered them worthy

of the name of family, and gave them one thought, one wish, one earnest and hard struggle in common.

And here are the Glades on the Tuesday evening, complete. Josiah in a state of excitement, and anxious to burst forth with the news which no one can guess, or will try to guess.

"I have been working at the lecture-room, as they term it," he said with a sneer; "wasting valuable time and good material on this simple scheme of that imbecile Chark. To think of being set on that job above everything else in the world. Father," turning to the head of the family, "I couldn't work with a will, for my heart wasn't in the work."

"I know where it was."

"Where?"

"In your throat, choking with mortification, because the committee had not asked your advice."

"No, sir—no," was the lofty rejoinder.

"Have you seen the list of lectures?"

"I am sorry to say I have."

"Mr. Alland leads off with 'Chipnam two

hundred years ago,' and Bayford the minister follows with 'The Holy Land,' Josiah."

"I know it, sir—I know it," was the peevish rejoinder. "If Mr. Bayford never made a false step in his life, he made it then. He should have held himself aloof from these purse-proud, automaton church folk."

"Why?" was the laconic query of his sire.

His son was only too anxious to demonstrate the reason why. The subject had engrossed all his thoughts that day, had tried his temper, and kept him nervous and irritable—he was full of his subject, and glad of a listener, even an unsympathetic one.

And accustomed as Josiah Glade was to his father's peculiarities, he had an idea that the old gentleman was not an unsympathetic listener on this particular occasion. Mr. Glade, senior, sat listening so very attentively, and nodding his head as if in gracious acquiescence to all the points of argument checked off on his son's fingers, and enunciated in a ringing voice. "Exactly," "Certainly," "I see," followed one another, Mr. Glade becoming quite ani-

mated under the eloquent diatribes of his son.

“So,” Josiah wound up, “there is no excuse for these lectures. If the poor are fond of the beer-shops and the streets, preach to them. If they scoff at religion, preach to them. If men neglect their children, beat their wives —”

“Lock ’em up,” commented the father.

“Preach to them—preach to them—preach to them! Sow broadcast the seed of life in the highways; and though some fall amongst thorns, and some on the rock, yet here and there the good word will touch soil more congenial——”

“Exactly.”

“And take root.”

“But why on earth, sir,” exclaimed the father, “should not the ground be levelled, ploughed, turned, and made ready to receive *all* the seed, instead of flinging away right and left in a hap-hazard manner. Why not teach these brutes to think a little first?—if it’s even how boots are made, or how the soap is constructed which is never applied to their own

ugly countenances. I'm dead against you, Josiah ; and so, three cheers for the Chipnam lectures !"

"That's 'like you, sir," said Josiah, bitterly. "It's always the way—I ought to have been prepared for it by this time. Mother, this tea is cold !"

"You've talked it cold," snapped the mother, "and I have been waiting to put the tea-things away this half-hour."

"Let me attend to Josiah, mother," suggested Dorcas.

"I'm in my own house," said Mrs. Glade, with freezing dignity. "When I'm laid in my narrow bed, it will be time enough to take my place, and see to these poor creatures, who are wrangling their lives away."

"My dear Polly, I never wrangle," asserted Mr. Glade.

"You're never of one mind for ten minutes together," was the flat contradiction.

"Mrs. Glade, I am surprised at you !"

"What do you mean by that?" cried the old lady in a shrill falsetto.

"Surprised at so stanch a member of Vale

Street Chapel—so respected a sheep from the Bayford fold, coolly giving voice to so extravagant an assertion.”

Mrs. Glade regarded her husband with contemptuous disdain, and checked Dorcas, who attempted a diversion at this juncture.

“Mr. Glade,” said she severely, “I shall not speak to you again for a week.”

“My dear Polly,” said her husband, deprecatingly, “it was only my ——”

“Not for a week, sir. I consider myself grossly insulted.”

Mrs. Glade relapsed at once into silence ; and Mr. Glade, having done all the mischief possible, went into the office to think over the sentence passed upon him by his helpmate. As truthful historians, we are bound to say that it did not affect him much ; for when he was in the office, looking over the few advertisements that had come in during the day—London advertisements about Ma’s life pills, and Holloboy’s ointment for sore places—he whistled one of Dibdin’s favourite sea-songs with precision and animation.

After his departure, Mrs. Glade fell into a

lachrymose vein concerning the contemptuous manner in which she had been treated all her life, and the little regard for anyone's opinions, save his own, that her husband had ever testified. He would come to grievous harm some day—years ago, through his own wilfulness and blindness, he had only escaped it by a hair's-breadth.

Josiah Glade jumped to his feet with a suddenness that elicited a little suppressed shriek from his mother.

"That'll do, mother, that'll do!" he exclaimed, "we have enough to do with the present, without raking over the ashes of the past. Mother, I won't have this!"

"I'm worried, Josiah," said the mother by way of half-apology—she feared her son somewhat, though she placed him under her silent system occasionally, when his tempers were too much for him and herself.

"We are all worried just now," he remarked; "perhaps it would be better if we tried to worry other people less."

"Do you mean that for me, Josiah," said

his mother; "do you think I ever worry or make troubles out of nothing?"

"We all do in our turn, perhaps," said he gloomily.

"And even Josiah Glade *will* make an unnecessary trouble out of the Chipnam lectures," said Dorcas, with a little musical laugh.

"Or the lectures will trouble me in spite of myself, Dorcas," said he, softening somewhat.

"Well, let us hope for the best from them, and not make concerning them the most doleful of prophecies."

"Mr. Bayford's altering for the worse."

"I don't believe it, Josiah."

"Now, just look here ——"

"Oh! I won't look, I won't hear," cried Dorcas, running out of the room, to return a moment afterwards with her bonnet and her brother's hat.

"Come and take me for a blow over Chipnam Downs, Josiah," said his sister, "and let us see if the upper ground cannot give us higher thoughts. You've been working too hard lately, and I have been very busy too, and the change



will do us both good. I wonder now if mother ——”

“Oh! don’t think of me,” interrupted this extremely lugubrious old lady, “I can drudge on here, and seek no thanks for drudgery.”

“Mother, if you will only——” began Dorcas.

“You know I can’t climb the hills,” she interrupted a second time——“that I am fit to die sometimes coming back from Vale Street.”

“Then we will take the coach-road, mother,” said Dorcas, “and Josiah and I will wait for you to get your bonnet on.”

“You’ll wait all night then, for I’m not going out. You know I hate going out of an evening, Dorcas—you only do it to make me fractious.”

Dorcas had been long aware of her mother’s objections to fresh air, but the old lady had spoken in an aggrieved tone, and implied that she had only waited for an invitation to accompany them. Now, having made Dorcas uncomfortable, and vented a little of her ill-temper away, she softened suddenly and insisted on an extra neckerchief round Dorcas’s white

throat, if she thought of venturing on the bleak Downs that evening.

“It’s too late for the hills—it will be dark before you come down ; but if you are determined to go up there trapesing,” (Mrs. Glade often indulged in words of an eccentric conformation, it may be observed,) “just put this round your neck—do !”

When Josiah Glade and his sister were in the street, he said, impatiently—

“Now, which way are you determined to take me ?”

“Up on the Downs—haven’t I said so ?”

“It will be past seven before we are there.”

“And scarcely dark till half-past eight. Come along, and let us talk about something foreign to that awful thought which preys upon you.”

“Oh ! I don’t want to talk about it any more. And perhaps it’s not so very awful ; but the church people have been looking down on us so long, sneering, deriding, and contemning us, thinking themselves so immeasurably above us.”

“We shall be immeasurably above them

in our turn, when we get to the hills, Josiah."

"We have been above them all our lives," he said, dead to his sister's pleasantry; "and now we are to descend to their level, and seek to curry favour with them! I'll ask no favour, mind you!"

And he pulled his hat savagely over his brows at the idea of seeking a favour from a churchman. Dorcas, by degrees, weaned him from the topic which troubled him, and had so far succeeded that they were both talking of the fine crop of wild flowers which the slopes afforded that year, when Susan Bayford very swiftly and decisively met them in their ascent. She was coming from the Downs, and had been walking rapidly enough to bring the colour to her cheeks. With that heightened colour, and the smile of welcome to two members of her brother's fold, she looked a different, even a pretty, young woman to the austere maiden whom we have heard lecturing her brother Robert on the sins of Sunday travelling. She had been doing good, too, across the Downs yonder, leaving a little basket of provisions with a very

poor family, who had come to sickness and consequently to grief—for failing health in the poor is ever the straight road to the Union. And doing good gives a light to the eyes, a colour to the cheek, and a springiness to the step, working a wondrous difference in the *tout-ensemble*—try the effect, reader, in your own way, and in any direction, and see if your friends will not inquire amongst themselves what has happened to the “old fellow” that he looks so altered?

Josiah Glade raised his hat with more politeness than might have been expected from so unceremonious an individual. Susan Bayford and Dorcas Glade shook hands.

“This is a late visit to the Downs, Dorcas,” she said.

“We must snatch at fresh air when we can, Miss Glade,” she replied.

“Right,” returned Susan, “or our health will suddenly fail us. I have been scolding my brother James to-day because he preferred shutting himself in his study to accompanying me. He is reading up for his lecture, I believe.”

“He had better be reading up for his sermons, Miss Bayford,” was the fierce comment of the gentleman facing her.

Susan Bayford flushed up for a moment. There was fire enough in her eyes to have annihilated the discourteous speaker. Still, her life had been one of effort, of self-compression, and she was ever mistress of herself—only her change of colour betrayed the sudden anger that was kindled into life within her. It did not matter that she had opposed her brother’s intention of working with the church; that that morning she had accused James of growing weak, and becoming a man more easily led by designing minds—that was no reason why Mr. Glade should stab her with his words, and also imply her brother’s weakness. Of that brother’s weakness she was scarcely certain in her own mind, and it was early in the day for others save herself to proclaim it.

“My brother never omits a proper attention to his sermons, sir,” she observed coldly.

“He has had nothing to distract him, Miss Bayford,” cried Glade, darting back into the

old groove, along which he proceeded to run with an amazing velocity ; “ nothing till this time, when a trumpery scheme for elevating the working-classes is suggested by a dreamy speculatist—a minister who prefers amusing the masses, instead of warning them of the error of their ways.”

“ My brother will warn them to-morrow at the railway cutting.”

“ What is one warning to these hardened natures, Miss Bayford ? I have warned them, too, with no result. I preached to them at their work, Miss, myself. I took upon myself to remonstrate with them on their sins, their callousness, and their heedlessness ; and the foreman—a dignified brute of a man—told me if I came down there again interfering with the men when they were at their work, he’d—he’d lock me up ! These are the old barbarous times back again, Miss,” he cried, “ when a man is threatened with gaol for trying to make his fellow-men better Christians.”

“ You are not idle in the good cause, Mr. Glade,” said Susan Bayford, softening, “ and must expect many disappointments. For your

efforts I am sure my brother will thank you heartily. And I do not think," she said, dubiously, "that these lectures to the poor will abate any of my brother's zeal. He says not."

"He cannot know—he don't know," cried Glade, "for he is easily deceived."

"No, sir," with more sharpness.

"You will pardon me, Miss Bayford, but I speak from experience. I say he is easily deceived."

"And I say he is not, sir."

"I beg to repeat—"

"Josiah, you are forgetting yourself," remonstrated his sister; and Josiah Glade swallowed the lie direct that had been given him with a wry expression of countenance.

"May I ask if you have been to visit the Wiltons, Miss Bayford?" Dorcas inquired, by way of relieving the unpleasant hiatus in the dialogue.

"Yes; the old man appears very ill. I have been reading to him to-day; my brother was with him in the morning. His wife tells me that he is never easy without some one is reading the Bible to him."

"His wife cannot read, I think, Miss Bayford?" Glade asked.

"Not a word."

"Dorcas," said Josiah, suddenly, "I'll go and see old Wilton!"

"But——"

"I had forgotten him—he's ill and wants some one to read to him. You can return with Miss Bayford. I'm going now."

"But I can accompany you, Josiah."

"No; I shall be back late, if the old man is not sleepy. You may be wanted at home."

His significant nod reminded Dorcas of a slight difference between Mr. and Mrs. Glade, and of her old part of happy medium, which it had been her business to play since her childhood. She did not press Josiah to allow her to accompany him, but returned down the slope with Miss Bayford, who lectured her a little by the way on the rudeness of her prosaic brother.

Meanwhile, that brother went on over the Downs at a rapid pace, becoming excited in his progress, as the wind came dead against him and fluttered the skirts of his coat, and rendered one hand to his hat necessary. With



his disengaged hand and arm he beat the air a little, by way of accompaniment to a violent harangue on something or somebody. Probably an attack on lecturing, and the folly of wasting time in seeking to amuse, or an imaginary conversation, in which he obtained the best of the argument, between him and Mr. Bayford or Mr. Alland.

He had the Downs all to himself, and there was no one to contradict him. There was a keen satisfaction in listening to his own voice, and his withering denunciations on everything and everybody opposed to his own particular views. The faster he walked, and the more the wind blew, the more Josiah Glade shouted. Perhaps it was lucky that he was going to read to Mr. Wilton instead of preach to him; or lucky for Wilton that he was an old gentleman, who had agreed with everybody all his life, and was not likely to dispute at so late a stage with three-fourths of the breath out of his body.

Yet, to have seen Josiah Glade an hour afterwards, sitting by the old man's bedside, reading in a subdued tone, and doing his best to explain to him the difficult passages in the

chapter, was to wonder which was the true Josiah Glade—the rampant, black-browed, rough-haired being, whom a word disturbed and rendered disagreeable ; or this grave-faced, earnest-looking man, ministering to one sick unto death ?

## CHAPTER II.

## AN ACCIDENT.

PROCEEDING across Chipnam Downs that late spring evening, it did not suggest itself to Josiah Glade how near might be his own turn to take to his bed and become as helpless as an infant. Reconciling the old man to the ills that flesh is heir to, he recked not of the ills in store for him lying so little beyond there in the impenetrable distance. Only twenty-four hours between him and that which was to keep him a prisoner to his room for many a long day.

Josiah Glade met with an accident at the town-hall on the following afternoon. Too little thought for the nature of his task, and

too much brooding over the old grievance, against which his heart was set—and both happening on some planks and ladders twenty feet from the floor, caused a wrong step and a sudden precipitation to the bottom, where he was found groaning by the workmen.

There was no hospital in Chipnam, and Josiah Glade was carried to his own home, down the High Street, the High Street shopkeepers and the people from the market, and all the little boys and girls who spring up in the streets by magic whenever there is anything worth seeing, running into the roadway and swelling the *cortège* to the office of the *Chipnam Gazette*.

Everyone knew Josiah Glade—he was one of the leading characters in the town, had in his time and in his turn offended every one of his friends, neighbours, and acquaintances. A hundred remarks were made upon the accident, according to the temper of the speakers; a hundred suppositions for its occurrence hazarded.

“I knew he’d come to grief to last,”—“I fancied that Jo Glade was going it too fast,”

—"It's a judgment on him for always railing at the church," observed the pew-opener of St. Martin's—"If he hasn't been drinking, it's odd to me," remarked the most uncharitable of the crowd—and "Ah! it's like them hypocrites, all over," said a stanch No-Churchman, who prided himself upon his plain-speaking and blasphemy.

We need not dwell at any length upon the confusion into which affairs at the *Chipnam Gazette* office were thrown by the sudden mishap to Josiah Glade. It was printing-day, and old Glade and two printer's-devils—young devils very new to the business, who were driving Glade mad with their blunders—were hard at work at the back of the shop when Josiah Glade was borne in by his supporters, followed by the tag, rag and bobtail of Chipnam.

The bearers of the young dissenter carried him upstairs; the tag, rag and bobtail were with difficulty got into the street; half a minute afterwards the Chipnam surgeon, who had received the news *ex officio*, but had not waited for a formal invitation, was ready

to inquire into the extent of the injuries received.

It was strange how this common trouble to the Glades changed the surface of things ; how the minor discrepancies of character which kept the body politic apart, now linked them together and rendered them considerate, careful, and kind one to another. Mrs. Glade forgot, possibly for the first time in her life, the ukase issued against her lord and husband on the preceding night. She was accustomed invariably to keep to the strict letter of the law, and sentence of a week's "Coven-try" had been passed upon Mr. Glade only yesterday. Until Josiah had made his appearance on a shutter, Mrs. Glade had been freezingly silent with her husband, and at least peevish and irritable with her daughter ; but it was all forgotten now—here was a Glade in downright trouble, and when real sorrow fell upon them at the *Chipnam Gazette* office, every one worked with a will.

The injuries received by Josiah Glade were, to say the least, of a very serious nature—of a nature so serious that, later that day, the

surgeon arrived with a physician of some eminence, who resided six miles from Chipnam.

The physician was, however, more hopeful than the surgeon—no bones had been broken, there had been a grand shake up of the whole system, and when things were composed a little, Josiah Glade would show signs of improvement. The physician did not believe that there was any internal injury—time would prove. Josiah Glade was to be kept very quiet.

But Glade was not a man to assist in that attempt, and although scarcely able to articulate above a whisper, desired to put a number of questions to the physician on his own particular condition. He was not afraid to face the worst ; he should consider anyone his enemy who wished to hide the truth from him. Was there any danger? “Good heavens!” he gasped forth, his black eyebrows contracting after the old fashion, “did they all think he was a baby, to be kept from the truth? He had never been afraid of the truth.” The physician told him the truth, which he would not believe—he considered that he had fallen from too great

a height not to have hurt himself seriously. He was positive it would be the death of him, and even appeared a little disappointed when solemnly assured that he was likely, with common care, to be as well as ever.

"You need not think of putting your house in order just yet, Mr. Glade," said the physician, laughing.

"It's a serious subject to jest about, sir," was Josiah's sharp reproof.

In the evening he was delirious, and talked of nothing save the Chipnam lectures, and mourned over the retrogression of his pastor and master, James Bayford.

And James Bayford, who had received news of the accident, stood by the bedside of his energetic follower, and listened to his accusations, his muttered regrets, and his doleful prophecies of the evil times that were coming to Chipnam, when amusing the masses was to be preferred to converting them. It was a delirium that rendered Josiah Glade unconscious of the sorrowing and sympathizing faces round his bed, but did not give any great degree of incoherence to his speech. He argued, rea-



soned, accused and rhapsodized in quite a logical manner; and having his own way, with no one to contradict him, seemed eventually to soothe him, for at ten o'clock when the doctor's boy came knocking at the door with the medicine, Josiah Glade had talked himself into a deep sleep, which lasted till the early hours of the morning. Glade had father, mother and sister all for watchers that night—with all his bad temper and uncomfortable eccentricities, he was a favourite. There was sterling metal in the man, and if he only showed it at rare intervals, and then in a fashion the reverse of pleasant, still he did show it, and was loved. Loved by a mother more odd and inconsistent than himself; for he was an only boy, and mothers love their "only boys" with an extraordinary affection. You, dear mothers, who may read this, will you not confess to a few grains-worth of extra partiality—only a few grains from an immense storehouse of love, where there is room enough for all—for that only "lout," that is so great a trouble to you and your daughters?

Mrs. Glade was a little too demonstrative

with her affection ; cried and sniffed all night, and made little dashes to the bed-side to tuck him up or smooth his pillow, when tucking up or pillow smoothing was likely to disturb the first good sleep of the invalid. She thought it was all her own fault too, by some round-about reasoning, to which no one paid any attention, and which began from his youth when he objected to be apprenticed to the cabinet-making ; if he had not been overruled, and the master who had taken a fancy to him had not over-persuaded him, and even taken him without a premium, why, this accident could not have happened—and she was a wicked woman, the Lord forgive her all her sins !

“Dorcas, my dear, tell your mother not to make such a noise,” Mr. Glade would gently remonstrate ; “if she wake the boy, it may be serious.”

He would not tell her himself, lest the old lady should think he was harsh with her at such a time.

The next day Josiah Glade was much weaker. The effects of the fall were beginning to be apparent ; he could not turn in his bed, or raise

a finger to help himself. Father, mother and sister were alarmed then, but the surgeon said it was a natural result; he had wished to see it on the preceding night, the energy and excitement of which had been unnatural. It was a good sign, so the family breathed freer, and consented each to take a certain portion of watch throughout the day, instead of sitting of a row in his bed-room staring at him and robbing him of fresh air.

Glade went away to his printing and publishing; and to show his philosophical indifference to passing events, whistled melancholy Scotch ditties over his work.

"Nothing ever affected him *much*," was one of his proudest assertions—what had happened was inevitable, and the inevitable he had been always accustomed to regard with a stony aspect. It had come—and grief, or remorse, or excitement was a folly. Still, despite it being the busiest day in the week, the devils were being constantly sent upstairs with inquiries as to how the boy was getting on, and with injunctions not to forget the barley-water, and the regular doses of medi-

cine, &c., as though he alone were the party interested in Josiah Glade's recovery. Acting the reporter as well as publisher and printer to the *Chipnam Gazette*, it became his duty to report the accident in full, in the pages of that popular journal. He was rather proud of his task, of his Socratic sternness over the details, of the matter-of-fact way with which he disguised the father in the man of business. He felt as though he had stepped out of the Roman History to knock off that little job, and took considerable credit to himself for the business style with which he rounded the usual phrase—"considerable fears are entertained for the sufferer's recovery." Upon revising the proof, he found that he had twice written "the poor lad" instead of the "sufferer" or the "injured man," and he drew his pen through the "poor lad" immediately, and sacrificed his sympathies to conciseness.

Josiah Glade continued weak. It was not till the third day that he found his voice again. Very patient and tractable during those many hours of weakness had he become—conscious of the kindness, gentleness

and interest evinced by all who came to see him, and turning to all with a smile that had a wonderful effect in softening features generally hard and stern to look upon.

The first words were—"You have been all very kind to me," and his first sign of returning strength was to stretch forth his hand from the bed towards his father.

"You have been fretting about me, father," he said.

"I, my lad?—I never fretted about anything in my life."

"You look wearied and worried."

"There's been some extra printing in from the town."

The proprietors of the *Chipnam Gazette* undertook general printing with punctuality and despatch.

"The doctor tells me that I am to be a trouble to all my friends and acquaintances for many weeks yet. You will have to work alone for the good old cause now."

"Ay, my lad."

"You don't flinch—you have never thought of flinching since that day?"

“Have I been a man ever to flinch from it? Am I not bound by my oath?”

“Yes. I wish, though——”

“Well?”

“No matter, that’s an old subject, on which we always quarrel. I am not strong enough to quarrel yet awhile.”

“I wish you were. Never mind, Josiah—we’ll have a regular up-and-downer when you’re a little bit better, my boy.”

And with this consolatory assurance, Mr. Glade went downstairs to attend to the sale of the *Chipnam Gazette*, it being publishing morning, and a rush of three or four men and a boy expected at six A.M., for early copies to proceed to London by the first train, and startle the metropolis with the opinions of Chipnam on things in general.

Josiah Glade got rapidly better after that day, became less equable in his demeanour, and began to evince signs of his old irritability. The family were delighted; and when he snapped up his mother for spilling the beef-tea over his clean shirt, just as he had been “done up” for Mr. Bayford’s expected visit, the

old lady cried with joy to think his dear bad tempers were all coming back so naturally.

When he was allowed to sit in a capacious leathern chair by the window, and see the Chipnam world passing beneath him, he was almost himself again—there was so much to see and find fault with. There were the navvies of an evening lounging about the street—there was the jug and bottle entrance of the “Chipnam Arms” over the way—and there was a bill of the forthcoming lectures in a shop-window exactly opposite.

He began to fidget about those lectures again, and his sister Dorcas to study to distract his attention by reading to him, or relating little incidents of the town, &c.

One evening, Mr. James Bayford entered, and took his usual place in front of the convalescent.

“When’s the first lecture, sir?”

“Next Thursday.”

“I hope you’ll be there to stop any insidious allusion to our form of worship, sir,” pleaded Glade; “Alland will slide it in, sir, depend upon it.”

"I am not afraid of him, Glade."

"You will be there, sir?"

"Of course—of course."

"I wish you had never put your name to the scheme, Mr. Bayford," said he, beginning to rub his wiry hair the wrong way, "it will do a deal of harm. The more I think of it, the more I am convinced that we shall lower the standard of religion by the means adopted."

"I don't see that," said James Bayford, walking into the trap laid for him.

The spring closed at once—Josiah Glade was strong enough to argue the point now; throughout his illness he had been accumulating a crushing weight of facts to hurl at the head of the first person brought in argument against him. Whether James Bayford would have withstood the blow, or dashed the theory to fragments, remains a matter of uncertainty. Dorcas Glade, who had been watching from the corner of the room, and feared the effects of undue excitement, stepped between the combatants, and turned the conversation.

"I received a note from Miss Susan this morning, Mr. Bayford."



"To be sure. Another new dress, I hear, is in preparation. It's a very dreadful thing," he said, with a pleasant laugh, "to have a sister so fond of the pomps and vanities of this world."

Josiah Glade never could see a joke for the life of him. Stern, sober facts were things he could only appreciate.

"Surely, Mr. Bayford, you understand the earnest nature of your sister better than that?"

"Well, I think I understand her by this time," he said drily, "and she's none the less a good sister and a true Christian, because she prefers to be trim about the waist instead of baggy. And I think, Dorcas," he said, laughing, "there is a slight bagginess which she objects to, for she is coming in the identical dress to point it out."

"My daughter never made a baggy dress in her life, Mr. Bayford," said the old lady, who entered at this juncture.

"I beg pardon, Mrs. Glade," exclaimed the minister, "perhaps baggy is too strong a term. Your daughter Dorcas will forgive me. It's not my term, it is my brother Robert's."

"Ah! it's like *him*," muttered Mrs. Glade, as though she had known Robert Bayford all his life, and known nothing to his credit.

"Yes, it is like him—he's a light-hearted man, with ever a jest at the world which has treated him well. And he's a man whom the world hasn't spoilt."

He looked inclined to relate some anecdotes of his brother on the instant; his eyes sparkled and his face became so radiant. But Mrs. Glade did not want his anecdotes, and verged on the uncivil during the remainder of his stay.

"Coming here sneering at my daughter's dressmaking, and telling her it's a baggy fit," she cried after his departure; "I'd be ashamed of such a thing—he a minister too!"

"It was only a jest, mother," said Dorcas.

"What's a minister to do with jesting," said this irascible lady, "he ought to know better at his age. I'll have nothing more to do with him—I'll go to Mr. Alland's church next Sunday, see if I don't."

And she did. Considering herself ill-used by the Reverend James Bayford, she withdrew

her patronage and took up with the church folk. It had been always more comfortable that church—she caught less colds there.

Later that day Miss Susan Bayford arrived, to drink a cup of tea in a friendly manner with the Glades, and to show Dorcas where a slight alteration might, she thought, be made with advantage to her dress. Mrs. Glade did not enter an appearance that evening—she had neglected her “marketing” during her son’s illness, and had departed “up town” with an enormous basket to lay in groceries for the ensuing month. Mr. Glade was busy in the office, and so Susan sat at the tea-table with Dorcas, whilst the convalescent lay back in his chair by the window which looked upon the High Street. A pleasant summer evening, with the breeze stealing in at the open window, and freshening the room over the office where those three sat.

Josiah Glade was in an indolent mood for once. Like a good young man, as he was at heart, he had been reading his Bible until Miss Bayford’s arrival; now he was content to recline in his chair and join in the conversation,

or look out of the window at the townsfolk. He looked more often at Susan Bayford, however; thought what a striking likeness she bore to her brother; how energetically she talked of parish matters and chapel business, of the little world of dissent wherein she moved, and worked, and did much good. She was perhaps a trifle too assertive in her manner, he thought, as if she must be right in all she said and did—a firm, positive maiden, who had a will of her own without doubt.

He did not agree with all her assertions—for he had opinions of his own, the reader is aware—and he had offended her more than once by his hasty remarks on her views of any particular case; but he respected her very much for the good of which she was the agent, and the fair name she bore amongst her brother's flock.

So while she and his sister gossiped together at one end of the room, he sat and furtively watched them from the other. When he had been in full possession of his health and strength, he had had scarcely time to watch Susan Bayford so narrowly; now in his

weakness he must perforce sit still and look at something. So he looked at Susan, and thought what a pale, keen, thoughtful face it was ; and then what a comfort it was that her sister Dorcas had such a friend—for they were really stanch friends, as will presently appear when we have time to fill in our canvas more closely. Then he thought of that sober-coloured French grey dress ; of the fit of the waist, and that odious term “baggy” which had given his mother offence ; and it struck him that Susan Bayford was exceedingly particular, for, so far as his idea went, the dress was a good fit, and Susan Bayford’s waist slim and graceful enough for anything !

They were talking about the fit, too, in an under tone, which they did not suppose for an instant reached his ears ; or, at least, that he was not occupied with deeper thoughts than the set of Susan Bayford’s dress.

“You will excuse my saying that it is not quite tight enough, Dorcas,” she said ; “I was always particular, you know, and dresses will wear out as fast again if there be any superfluous folds.”

"I see where the error is, Miss Susan. Five minutes will rectify it."

"To be sure. And you must come and spend an hour with me to-morrow evening and make the alteration. It's very seldom, Dorcas, that you come to our little cottage now."

"You forget how ill Josiah has been. I don't think he can spare me even yet, Miss Bayford."

"Yes, I can," issued from the shady corner wherein the brother was ensconced.

"You're not strong enough to walk across the room yet."

"I tell you I am," was the petulant answer.

"I shall postpone my visit till the day after to-morrow, Miss Susan," said Dorcas.

"The day after to-morrow I attend Mr. Alland's lecture."

"Whatever do *you* want there, Miss Bayford?" exclaimed Josiah.

"My brother James thinks I ought to accompany him," returned Susan very mildly. Josiah Bayford was more surprised at the manner of her reply than the reply itself. Whenever he allowed a harsh word to escape him in address-

ing her, she always replied very briskly and sharply. Twenty times had he offended her by his uncouthness, and twenty times had she overlooked it, after giving him, directly or indirectly, as affairs might warrant, a piece of her mind. She had been ever quick to defend, and, even despite her assumed equanimity, to flash up at his crude remarks on things which affected her—why did she answer that evening so very demurely, and even look so nervously towards him?

He was a shrewd man, for he guessed at the truth very readily, after a moment's deliberation. Dorcas had been telling her about his illness, and how weak he was; and how a little excitement might undo all the good effected by past care; therefore Susan Bayford was treating him like a child that required humouring. How very annoying, to be sure!—he who felt nearly strong and well again—what a liberty of Dorcas! He did not admire Miss Bayford's mild mood at all; it was unnatural, and he had rather admired her eyes flashing a little, and her lips compressing, and her bosom throbbing a little at his savage re-

marks. Sometimes he was sorry afterwards that he had gone too far, at other times rather exultant that he had got the best of the argument. But as for Miss Bayford being considerate towards *him*, and afraid of exciting *him* by opposition, that was treating him like a baby, and he did not like it.

"It will look very bad," he muttered.

"What will, sir?"

Had it been for her life, or likely to affect the life of him she addressed, Susan Bayford could not have refrained from that rapidly-uttered interrogatory. The invalid in the corner drew his breath more freely. Ah! that was better; there was something more natural in the minister's sister now; he was drawing her out beautifully!

"I think it will look very bad, all the dissenters in Chipnam flocking to the lecture of the Reverend Mr. Alland. Like an excuse, in fact, to hear that gentleman."

"I don't think anything of the kind, Mr. Glade."

"Perhaps you have not sufficiently studied the matter, Miss Bayford?"



“ If I had not—— ”

Miss Bayford paused, glanced uneasily at the weak man in the distance, looked at Dorcas, and then broke into a pleasant rippling laugh. Josiah Glade experienced a curious feeling of pins and needles all over him, followed by the sensation of cold water trickling down his spine. He had no remembrance of Miss Bayford laughing before in that manner. He had admired her smile once or twice in his time, and thought how it softened and chastened her pale features; but the laugh gave him an electric shock, and made him feel faint. It was very annoying to be so weak—to sit there and be laughed at, and not have a word to say for himself.

“ Your brother is not strong enough to argue with me, or to be scolded by me for his over-zeal, at present, Dorcas. I withdraw from the discussion.”

“ I’m as strong as a lion, Miss Bayford. And I wish to know—— ”

Josiah Glade remembers to this day the extra pins and needles, and the extra cold water spinal application, that set in then—has a con-

sciousness still of Miss Bayford and his sister both leaving the tea-table and running towards him, of his sister unloosening his neckerchief, and Susan Bayford flinging the window higher still, and drawing further back the curtains therefrom.

He did not faint, but he had gone very close to the neutral ground—he did not know how close, till he became conscious of another visitor in the room, who had entered during his momentary unconsciousness, and whose arrival quite revived him.

## CHAPTER III.

## PROMOTION.

“MR. ALLAND!” exclaimed the invalid.

It was no other than the rector of Chipnam, an unlooked-for guest, and the sight of whom surprised others beside Josiah Glade. Dorcas curtseyed, and placed a chair for the clergyman; Miss Bayford stood looking at him irresolutely, and fidgeting with her bonnet-strings.

“I fear my unexpected appearance has disturbed you all,” said Mr. Alland courteously; “but it was your father’s wish that I should announce my own presence. Miss Glade, I fear that he has overrated your brother’s

strength, and that I have been a little precipitate."

"Not at all, sir," exclaimed Josiah, giving an emphatic bump in his chair. "Quite the contrary, sir."

"Mr. Glade is still very weak," said Susan Bayford, quickly.

"Miss Bayford does not know anything about it," was the rude rejoinder; at which the lady referred to tied her bonnet-strings with a jerk. "Miss Bayford is needlessly alarmed at a slight swimming in my head—a momentary swimming occasioned by the hot tea, I think. I am very well now, Mr. Alland; and if you do not mind a little talk with me about this coming lecture of yours. I should be glad to discuss the——"

"Josiah!" exclaimed Dorcas.

"Dorcas, I dislike interruptions—Dorcas, I *hate* interruptions!"

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"I beg——" began Josiah.

"And I beg Mr. Alland will not listen to you," said Susan, trembling with excitement; "will not allow you or himself to be led into argument."

"Miss Bayford may trust me," said Mr. Alland, looking a little puzzled at all these pros and cons; "I am not partial to argument at unseasonable times."

Or with unseasonable people, such as dissenters, he might have added. Particularly with such an unseasonable dissenter as Josiah Glade, cabinet-maker. However, he did not say too much, which was wise of him, considering on whose company he had intruded.

Miss Bayford departed after a stiff bow to Mr. Alland, who returned her salutation in a very stately manner. Miss Bayford and Mr. Alland had had many skirmishes in their time; they had crossed each other's path too often, and attacked each other's tenets too forcibly during their missions amongst the Chipnam poor, to be the best of friends. Candidly speaking, Mr. Alland abhorred Miss Bayford; she was his *bête noire*. Had he been aware of

her presence at that juncture upstairs in the room over the *Chipnam Gazette* office, he would have deferred his visit, which even then he was not paying with his whole heart. He had talked himself into its being a duty to call upon one who had been injured during a superintendence of repairs at the town-hall, and from his duties—however objectionable—he prided himself on never swerving. And he had walked into a trap! The world of Chipnam knew too much of the likes and dislikes of its component atoms, not to be aware that Miss Bayford was a greater horror of his than her eloquent hard-hitting brother, and that old rascal downstairs in the office was no doubt chuckling at the awkward position into which he had lured him.

“Go upstairs, Mr. Alland, you’ll find no one there but my daughter and a friend of hers,” old Glade had said. And he had walked upstairs and found Miss Bayford!

After all, he was sorry that he had come. He was not quite certain that it was a duty now. He might expect his actions to be misinterpreted and seen in a false light. Only two



months ago Miss Bayford had accused him of trying to wean from dissent an old bed-ridden woman down a court near the market-place, when the old woman had actually sent for him of her own free will and accord. He could not refrain from a smile, however, at the consciousness of that motive not being attributed to him in this instance. Miss Bayford would not believe he had arrived with a hope of converting Mr. Glade. At all events, she left the field clear for his experiments—and he would as soon have tried to convert the Pope of Rome. Still, he was on dangerous ground—he had had specimens of Mr. Glade's eccentricities, and he wished to steer from argument on any topic. Miss Bayford need not have given him a warning to that effect.

“I could not refrain from calling to inquire after your brother's health, Miss Glade,” said the rector, “and to congratulate him on his convalescence.”

“He is much better, sir, and you—you are very kind.”

“I do not say—I cannot hope—that my visit is particularly welcome to him,” said Mr.

Alland, with just the ghost of a satirical meaning peeping forth ; “but I am none the less anxious to know if he be progressing satisfactorily.”

Mr. Alland spoke in the third person ; for Josiah Glade, affronted with the treatment experienced from the whole world without a single exception, had curled himself round in his arm-chair and closed his eyes. It was a great effort to lie there and say never a word—he who was fond of so many words !—but they had so worried him about keeping still and not exciting himself by argument, that he would remain quiet now with a vengeance ! This high-churchy being, who had stalked down from St. Martin’s to show how patronizing he could be at a pinch, was not going to impose upon him ! His presence there was no compliment to him. He should have liked to have tackled the rector on his forthcoming lecture ; but they had persisted in interrupting him so incessantly, that he would shut his eyes now, and let them have it all their own way. He wished his blood didn’t boil so much though ; it gave him a singing in his head, and affected

him with twitches. Once Dorcas stooped near his elbow, as though to pick up a stray piece of ribbon from the carpet, and whispered, "for shame, Josiah !" but Josiah was rather pleased at this novel mode of receiving the rector of St. Martin's, and kept his eyes closed.

Mr. Alland was a man with no sense of humour in his composition ; he looked at things seriously, and had many thoughts to keep him serious, but the eccentricities of this man amused him. It was so striking a contrast ; the present deportment of young Glade, with the energy exhibited at his first appearance before him. He would try and restore him to life again. He had heard news that morning which he thought would rouse him ; but then he did not know Josiah Glade's power of self-command—excitable and obstinate as he might prove himself at times.

"Is he subject, Miss Glade, to these strange kinds of stupor?" he asked, looking a little doubtfully towards him.

Dorcas accepted the hint. It was less embarrassing to consider Josiah's present fit of ill-temper as a stupor occasioned by his weakness.

"As he gets stronger he will recover from them, I hope, sir."

"Naturally—naturally."

There was a very long pause. Dorcas felt very much inclined to laugh, when her brother half-opened one eye to see what they were doing. Mr. Alland was standing with one hand on the back of the chair Dorcas had indicated a few minutes previously, and with the other was swinging his hat carelessly to and fro. Dorcas stood at a little distance from him.

"Has Mr. Chark called here to see your brother, may I ask?"

"He has sent twice a day, Mr. Alland," was the reply, "and talks of visiting us the first day he comes down from the heights."

Josiah would have liked to remark, that Mr. Chark's visits were no more required than Mr. Alland's patronage, but he held his peace.

"We are all working together for one good end, they say," said Mr. Alland, and the "*they say*" sounded very strangely to Dorcas. "Of course we were all grieved at the sad

accident occurring to your brother—a volunteer in the good cause with us.”

Josiah Glade writhed in his chair. He a volunteer in the cause of lecturing to a parcel of savages—he who had protested against it to the last, and seen the folly of it from the first. He indeed!

“I am glad to hear that he is recovering rapidly—I met by accident his employer this morning.”

“Mr. Kernett?”

“Yes. He tells me that he misses your brother very much. That your brother’s forethought, and clearness at suggesting ideas, are not to be replaced. To much of your brother’s ingenuity, and steady application to business, he attributes his success during the last four years.”

“Oh! I am so glad!” cried Dorcas, clapping her hands in her enthusiasm; “I always knew he was clever and patient at his business—but he has never spoken of Mr. Kernett to us, and Mr. Kernett being a —— attending St. Martin’s,” corrected Dorcas, “we have had little opportunity of seeing him.”

"He will be here to-morrow, if his health allow."

Mr. Kernett, it may be presumed, was a confirmed invalid.

"Indeed! Josiah?"

She turned rapidly towards him at the news, but Josiah kept his eyes closed, and moved not a muscle of his countenance.

"I told him, Miss Glade, that I was coming hither, and he begged me to forestall him, and to prepare your brother for an offer he was about to make. I objected at first, but Mr. Kernett is a nervous man, and pressed me very hard to prepare your brother for it—to obtain an answer if possible and settle the matter at once. I suppose your brother is strong enough to hear good news?"

"Yes, sir, I hope so."

"I will leave it to you to break the news to him when he recovers from his exhaustion, Miss Glade."

"Thank you."

"Mr. Kernett is anxious to take him into partnership."

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mind me. It's my way, and it will be so till I die."

He ran both hands through his locks, and stood every hair bolt upright. The good news had shaken him a little, for his hands trembled very much.

"Tell Mr. Kernett my first walk shall be to his house, to thank him for all past favours, and to strive ever from to-day to deserve them better. I shall think better of you too, Mr. Alland, from to-day. There!"

"Thank you," was the dry response.

"I shan't like your preaching any better, or admire any more the books you write, and which have such a run—and I shall never believe lectures can work regeneration—especially *your* lectures—but I shall think better of you, sir."

Mr. Alland laughed. He went away laughing, well pleased with the effect which the news he had brought had had upon Josiah Glade—well pleased with himself that he had succeeded in even touching to the quick the stoniest dissenter in all Chipnam. Hard, dogged, and obdurate people, these dissenters, whom no

reasoning would convince aright—but still fellow-mortals, and *almost* Christians in their way.

Whilst Dorcas was seeking her mother, and imparting the good news to that old lady, from whom Josiah had inherited so much of his charming suavity of demeanour, the father had closed the office, and come up-stairs to talk to his son. He had not heard the news yet, and Josiah was the first to make the communication. The old gentleman remembered that Socrates was his model philosopher just in time; for he had sprung up, both feet at once, and come down with a thump that shook part of the office ceiling on to the counter.

Still, notwithstanding this exhibition of surprise and delight, he bottled his emotion, and said, very coolly—rather too coolly,

“I’ve expected it these six months.”

“You don’t mean that?”

“It was plain enough what was going to happen. Kernett was an invalid, and wanted a ruling agent; you were the best man he could get, and so he made a partner of you, and a fortune for himself, into the bargain.”

"He's a good man."

"He's a clear-sighted one. And though you're as obstinate as a pig, Jo, you're worth the promotion. Sir, I take the liberty of congratulating you on stepping clean over the heads of your forefathers."

He extended his hand in somewhat of a burlesque fashion ; but the grip was a hearty one, and held the hand in his so long, that the son looked up inquiringly.

"What difference will this make, boy ?" he asked, in a less affected tone.

"A great difference. A difference on the right side, father."

"You don't shrink ?"

"God forbid !"

"I am a clog round your neck to keep you ever from rising, my lad," he murmured.

"No, no—don't say that—don't think that. There is only one thing I regret in it all."

"Ah ! what's that ?"

"That you keep me in the dark still—that you keep something back."

“For your sake, not for mine. The dead *must rest!*”

“Well, well.”

Josiah was weak, and could not argue at any length; besides, it was an old argument in which he was always beaten. Years ago he had made a discovery; but he had reached the end of the labyrinth, where there were barred doors in his face. Only his father could unlock them, and he would not—his father, who had faith in him, and loved him, and yet was so hard and cold and impenetrable to some things—to God’s Word, worst of all.

Was he impenetrable?—or was it part of his Socratism, worn after the fashion of those who play their many parts, and have their entrances and exits? There is a deal of sham philosophy in this world.

There was no sham, however, but a downright earnest religious feeling which brought that strange young man to his knees in the shadow of the room whence the good news had come. He thanked God for his rise in life, and prayed for strength and power, and a good heart

amidst it all ; and his father, taken aback by his demonstrativeness, walked softly out of the room, and closed the door upon him.

Standing outside on the landing, the old man passed his hand once or twice across the bumps on his forehead, as though to make sure he hadn't lost any coming upstairs in his hurry—breathed hard once or twice, blew his nose violently, finally leaned his head against the door-sill, and went fathom-deep into thought.

He was on the alert, however ; for his wife and daughter coming suddenly from the next room, found him bowing towards them with mock politeness on the landing.

“ May I beg the favour of escorting you two ladies down the High Street ? ”

“ What for ? ” asked his wife.

“ I think we can afford to purchase a bottle of wine on the strength of Josiah's good luck. Port wine won't hurt him, the doctor says ; and as you two are rather red about the eyes, why, the fresh air will do you good—come, mother—come, Dorcas.”

“What’s the boy doing?”

“Oh! he’s asleep—don’t disturb him just now.”

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE FIRST LECTURE.

WE would not have the reader forget our friend Robert Bayford. In this good-hearted—nay, more, pure-hearted—man we take an interest, and would awaken an interest for him in our readers.

He was a man in a thousand—perhaps in a hundred thousand, for what we know of the matter. All that we know is, that we have only had the pleasure of one Robert Bayford's acquaintance. The reader is seeing him at his best now ; after a while he will be more like ordi-

nary mortals, led hither and thither by the straws on the surface.

At one-and-thirty, when we take up the thread of his narrative, we repeat, he was at least a man in a thousand. Most men of one-and-thirty years of age—men, too, who have made money abroad, are reticent and moody individuals; having much to do in the future, and having outlived all the romance of the past. Youth's fancies have dropped away like spring blossoms; the fruit has set; here and there an ugly canker is eating away at the core; there is a wife to take care of perhaps; there are the responsibilities of home, the troubles of business, and the taxes coming in once a quarter.

With Robert Bayford it was his happiest time. All the fever of money-getting had taken place between eighteen and twenty-five; he had been lucky as well as persevering; all that he had touched had turned to gold. Speculations in which other men had burned their fingers had only demonstrated that he was misfortune-proof. At twenty-six he had been old enough to fall in love with his



friend's daughter, and for her sake he had lived a very pure, honest life—the life of a true gentleman.

He was very happy in Chipnam ; settling down there for good, and superintending the erection of a handsome villa, about half a mile nearer Chingley than the residence of the Reverend Frederick Alland, M.A. Waiting for only a little while, before the Reverend William Chark should make Amy and him, in the sight of God, man and wife.

An open-hearted, unsuspicious man, with confidence in the world around him, he was not troubled much by Amy's timidity—a timidity at times that occasionally verged on reserve. He knew that she had changed towards him ; but she was a young woman, and five years alter, one so much. No doubt he was very strange to her in his ways, but she would soon become used to him again. God be thanked, there was coming such a happy time !

It was awkward, just a little perhaps, that his sister Susan was only frigidly polite to Amy, and that Amy did not appear to admire either her or James ; but then they had not

been at any pains to understand each other, or allow for each other's opposite views on matters theological. *N'importe*, he was at home now in their midst, and he had always been an excellent peace-maker. The many parts he had played between hot-tempered friends in his time, and the hands that had unclenched by his means to grasp each others' in friendship once more! There would only be an affectionate brother and an undemonstrative sister—whose nature was affectionate also—to reconcile to a wife who would love him very dearly, and—so love them for his sake. All as fair as the plains of ether behind the Chipnam hills. No clouds in the far away future to mar the happiness of his rejoicing. What had he done in his time to deserve so bright a life? Amy was becoming less reserved every day, he thought, now. Why, there was only a month more to wait, and then the marriage. A long honeymoon trip, a return to Chipnam, a charming villa ready for their reception, and a crowd of friendly faces to welcome them home.

Robert escorted Amy to the first lecture

given in the Chipnam Town-hall, admittance to which was FREE. He talked of that to which we have alluded, as they strolled along arm in arm together, and she trembled, blushed and looked down, but did not beg him to be silent, as she might have done three or four weeks since. The Reverend William Chark strolled with them, or rather behind them, *en route* for the same destination. He appeared very pleased at the aspect of things generally—at the look of the crops, the hilly scenery beyond, the fair prospect of settled weather beyond *them*; at the relative position of the young couple ahead of him, the graceful figure of his ward, the colossus of a man on whose arm she leaned. He tucked his stick under his arm, and rubbed one little white hand over the other—he seldom wore gloves—and chuckled audibly as he walked.

At the bend of the road Robert Bayford and his betrothed waited for him to join them.

“I am afraid we are leaving you too much in the background, my dear sir,” said Robert.

“Accustomed to the background all my life,” commented the incumbent, “the shady

side of the way always agreeing with me better than the sunshine."

"You will keep with us now, gardy—you have the tickets, remember."

"And if I make off with them, you and this stripling will have to enter with the crowd at the doors—how dreadful!"

"I think that's the first hitch in the machinery, Mr. Chark," said Robert, "the parceling off the disreputable from the respectable. If the respectable cannot mix with the disreputable, let them keep away and be hanged to them!"

"There are only a few reserved seats on the platform for friends of the lecturers and promoters of the undertaking. I don't see anything very objectionable in that."

"The parties you wish to amuse are rather a sensitive lot. If they catch a glimpse of Amy's pink silk, farewell every chance of bringing the black sheep of Chipnam out of the slums and beer-shops!"

"Do I look so dreadfully dressy, Robert?" asked Amy, laughing.

"Well, I shouldn't take you for a navvy's

daughter. I thought of attending myself in a flannel jacket and a bird's-eye neckerchief."

"Then I should not have accompanied you."

"Exactly so—therefore behold me a swell of the first water! And I forgive the pink silk for the sake of the pretty person inside it."

"Thank you."

So it may be seen that Amy Saville and Robert Bayford were in excellent spirits that evening, and Robert Bayford had fair cause to feel happy.

There was not a great rush to the lecture-hall that particular evening. The promoters of the scheme could have dispensed with reserved seats, and not have been swamped with the *canaille*. The *canaille*, in fact, did not care to come in, but hung about the doors and stood about the streets, and set dogs on to one another, much after the usual fashion. The poorer class of church folk assembled in fair force, a few of the tradespeople, and just a sprinkling of the dissenters—not the high dissent, but the broad. For there are High, Low, and Broad Dissent, as there are High, Low, and Broad Church.

The town-hall—which was a large place, and big enough for ten towns like Chipnam—was not half-full, and those who had come were not the people required. A great many were at their old corners in their favourite tap-rooms; a certain proportion was, as before mentioned, hanging round the outside. One or two navvies peeped in at the “goings on” during the lecture, but were keenly on the alert, as though they anticipated a recruiting sergeant and the Queen’s shilling. One hulking youth of nineteen, with the limbs of a Hercules, was peering round the door about half-past eight o’clock, when he was unceremoniously thrust forward by a playful contemporary, and woke up the echoes, and startled the lecturer and audience by the sudden clumping in of his enormous boots. Once in, and too abashed to beat an immediate retreat, he dropped into a seat at the door, and sat snorting painfully, until renewed attention afforded him an opportunity for three strides towards the door again, in the performance of which he knocked over a form.

“Dorm it, it wor awful hot insoidel” he

said to his friends around him ; “ and blest if the parson worn’t preaching in French ! ”

The parson was lecturing to the best of his ability, however ; but being unused to lecturing, and unmindful of the character of his audience, was dealing in very hard words, as was his wont. He had glanced at his notes that morning, and was lecturing extempore. He had, unknown to himself, a *penchant* for big words ; and as they came naturally, he did not stop to reflect that something in one or two syllables would have been equally as forcible, and to the many a trifle more clear. He had forgotten his audience to a great extent, and was absorbed in his subject.

Truly speaking, it was a fine lecture, although few people apart from the platform comprehended more than half of it. Two men who noted the elegant delivery, the high-sounding periods, the lofty flights of hyperbole, saw where lay the fault—the lecturer was a scholar, and forgot that his audience were not deeply read. He spoke of the kings and queens and famous men of past days, who had visited Chipnam—the reader will remember it was a

lecture on "Chipnam in the Olden Time"—as though all the world knew about them also, and there was no sketching required to render them distinct; he spoke of the hills around them like a geologist, the houses in the town like an antiquary; he quoted Chaucer, he even sent right and left little pellets of Latin and Greek, which scared the poor folk below him and made them writhe uneasily. The Reverend James Bayford, who had taken his place in the body of the hall—much to Mr. Alland's annoyance—saw Mr. Alland's mistake; so did Mr. Glade senior, who was taking short-hand notes for the benefit of the subscribers to the *Chipnam Gazette*. Possibly Mr. Alland saw his mistake himself, or detected a certain amount of vagueness and weariness on the countenances of his auditors, for he paused, descended to a lower stratum, gave an impetus to the lecture, and a turn of more general interest to its details.

He told a story of some fugitive princess wandering amongst the Chipnam hills without a place to rest her head, and, although her



royal highness had been dead two or three hundred years—I forget which—he related her adventures and trials and death with such true artistic fervour—histrionic might be more appropriate, were he not rector of St. Martin's—that there were tears falling amidst his audience, and white handkerchiefs fluttering spasmodically. Robert Bayford was watching the effect on the audience, when he caught sight of his sister's pale face, close to his brother's, looking in his direction very intently and strangely. It was a searching look, and rendered him uneasy; almost instinctively he turned to Amy sitting by his side, and who he felt assured was the object of his sister's microscopic gaze. The first real ugly spasm—that stitch in the heart to which so many of us are liable!—attacked him then, and made him wince.

Great Heaven!—what a picture of rapt attention and reverence! A neophyte at the feet of a saint could not have looked more absorbed, more truly rapt in the vision before her, of all that was high, pure and noble. She sat leaning a little forward,

with her great dark eyes turned towards the lecturer; her hands clasped tightly together in her lap, her whole soul carried away by the eloquence of him who stood there at the table. There were others attentive and affected, but there was no one so wholly apart from the world treading the Chipnam hills with the royal princess and Mr. Alland—none who had so wholly forgotten the present hour.

Robert Bayford laid his hand upon hers and she started, looked at him, flushed with fire to her temples, and then turned very pale.

“Have I frightened you, Amy?” he whispered.

“No.”

“The lecturer carries you away to a world of his own. He is a true genius.”

“I can’t say,” she answered, somewhat incoherently; “it is an interesting lecture—don’t you think so, Robert?”

“Very,” was the dry response.

When the lecture was at an end, and the promoters were gathered in little knots on the platform, and about the lecture-room, Mr. Chark

passed his arm through James Bayford's and led him towards Mr. Alland.

"Mr. Alland—Mr. Bayford," he said, by way of burlesque introduction.

Both young men extended their hands—Church greeted Chapel in the town-hall of Chipnam.

"I think we shall fail after all, Mr. Bayford," said the churchman.

"I do not see that," was the answer—"the days are early yet in which to give up."

"I am not likely to give up," replied Alland.

"We shall see an improvement every week," said Mr. Chark; "we could scarcely expect all the roughs of the town as an audience, yet awhile. I fancy, that if they had come—I shall not offend you, Alland?"

"Oh! no. Certainly not."

"If they had come, the lecture would have been just a shade too deep for them. Upon my word, I could scarcely follow you."

"I did not aim at any particular style—I spoke as I thought, Mr. Chark."

"You're not offended?"

“Offended at the truth? Is it likely?”

Mr. Alland clapped his hand on his brother clergyman's shoulder; he saw his fault at once. He had read it in Mr. Bayford's face, and might have considered a similar remark from the dissenter as an unwarrantable impertinence; from his soft-hearted old friend he could bear a great deal, after the first shock of an adverse criticism was recovered from.

“You have considerable experience of the world, my dear friend,” said Mr. Alland. “I rely upon your judgment. Going home with you this evening, you must give me a lecture in your turn.”

“We shall have another pattern set us next Thursday,” said Mr. Chark, turning to Mr. James Bayford.

“I fear my attempts will not appear to advantage after Mr. Alland's eloquence,” it might have been polite for Mr. Bayford to say; but he said, rather dreamily, “Yes, next Thursday,” and then looked round for his sister.

It was time to look round, for the man was

waiting to turn off the gas and lock the doors of the town-hall. The promoters went into the High Street—a carriage or two whirled away some of the neighbouring gentry—the Bayfords were left with Mr. Chark, Mr. Alland and Amy.

“I shall not take you away up the hill to-night, Master Robert,” said Mr. Chark; “the hour is late, and Mr. Alland lends me his arm to my villa. If you *will* have those books to-night, Alland?”

“I have to refer to them early to-morrow.”

“Another work, thou slave of the lamp?”

“A small one, my dear sir.”

“I give you warning that I shall present your books to you in the hall, and that the piano and Beethoven are locked up for the night.”

“I am in no mood for Beethoven,” he said; then, as if conscious that that hardly sounded a compliment to Miss Saville, he added:

“Miss Saville will scarcely believe that I am even becoming tired of my favourite composer?”

Miss Saville smiled, but did not reply. It

was a forced smile, Robert fancied, but he was full of fancies—odd ones enough, some of them !

“Then I am banished for the night,” said Robert, in a low tone, intended for her alone.

“It is late, Robert—your brother and sister evidently expect you to accompany them.”

“I leave you in good hands—good night.”

“Good night.”

He was conscious that he spoke a little coldly, and his conscience smote him for being foolish and unreasonable ; so he shook hands with her a second time, after exchanging adieux with Mr. Chark and Mr. Alland.

When they had gone he stood looking after them, till his sister startled him by laying her hand on his arm.

“You have no confidence in Mr. Alland, Robert.”

Susan Bayford was a woman who went straight to the subject. Very awkward mistakes and unpleasant sensations, these straight-hitters are the cause of at times. And there are times when they strike hard at the wrong

subject, and make a mess of it—as in this instance.

“Who?—I? What bosh!”

“Or else——”

“That’ll do, Susan. Let us go home. Here, Jemmy, take the other side of this lady, and let us trot her down-hill between us. I have a scolding to give her, and I want to see if you take her part or not.”

The brothers escorted the sister down the High Street, Robert beginning his scolding at once.

“I did not see you speak once to Amy this evening.”

“I had no opportunity till after the lecture.”

“And then you didn’t.”

“I might say that you did not see Amy speak to me, Robert.”

“You are very punctilious, you two—wait till I’m married and settled, and if you’re not sisters in arms in a week, I’m not Robert Bayford.”

“Oh! Robert, if it had been some one whom we could all love—if it were some

one who we could be sure would love you!"

"I don't like this kind of talk," said Robert, gravely; "you must forgive me if I say I can't have it—I won't hear it."

"Robert is right, Susan," said her brother. "You are nervous, and—shall we say non-sensical, Robert?"

He tried to turn the conversation to a lighter channel, but Robert was grave for once. There was a stern thought imprinted on his face, and it did not clear away during that walk home. He was troubled; for the first time, perhaps, inclined to take offence.

He bade them good night early, and went up to his room grave and taciturn to the last. He fancied that his brother and sister both looked at him reproachfully when he coldly bade them good night. He knew Susan was in the wrong, however; she carried her sectarian prejudices to too great a length; he could see that there was not a particle of love for Amy Saville in his sister's breast. If Amy Saville had called herself a dissenter, and gone



to chapel regularly, he thought, a little bitterly, what a difference it would have made!

In the midst of thoughts like unto this, some one tapped at his bed-room door. He opened it, and found Susan standing penitentially before him.

“Hollo!—what’s the matter?”

“I saw your light burning, and knew you were up. I have come to ask you to forgive me, Robert. James tells me that I was wrong to suggest a suspicion against one you love so dearly. I am hasty, and sometimes forget myself.”

“You are the best of prim maidens, Susan. There—forgiveness is granted. When one is hasty, the heart does not always speak. Who should know that better than I?”

He kissed her; she looking at him so wistfully. Once her lips parted as if to speak, and then she moved away to her room, with a little sigh that would escape in spite of her.

“I wonder what it all means,” said Robert Bayford, leaning his elbows on the windowsill, and looking out at the moonlight, and the

dark shadows of the Chipnam hills ; “is it getting a trifle foggy about here—or is it only my fancy !”

## CHAPTER V.

## PARSON-WORSHIP.

AND Amy Saville? Were things a trifle foggy with her, too; or was it all fair landscape, steeped in the sunshine, bright and undying? Certainly foggy, or why those long looks ahead when Mr. Chark was dozing; sleeping off on his couch, the effects of his up-hill walk?—why the weary expression of countenance, the lassitude, the scared look when a footfall or a knock at the door brought her back from dreamland? And of what was she dreaming? Did she know herself?—was she sure of the nature of the phantoms that troubled her? She tried to shut her eyes to them, to live

them down, and think them down. Ever before her as a guiding rein, to regulate her present life and conduct, was the love-troth pledged years ago when she was a girl. She strove to believe that it was all as she wished and hoped; what right to think, even in the dreamland whither she wandered so often, of other wishes and hopes foreign to *that*?

But she was not happy. She was doing her best to believe that she was, but things *were* "a trifle foggy" nevertheless.

It was a custom of Robert Bayford's to call for Amy every Sunday, and escort her to church—strangely enough to the church of St. Martin's in preference to that of St. Edward's. There were no free schools attached to St. Edward's, and Amy had devoted her young life to the schools of the parish church, and so, by a natural course of events enough, more to the business of St. Martin's than St. Edward's.

Mr. Chark never took notice of his ward attending another church,—her pew at St. Martin's faced the children's gallery, and kept the little ones in check; she sang also the

soprano part in the anthem with which Mr. Alland occasionally favoured the churchgoers. It had become a regular habit for Amy to attend St. Martin's, and still further help to decrease the congregation at her guardian's. And Robert Bayford fell into the same groove, until it struck him one day that Mr. Chark departed with rather a thoughtful face to St. Edward's.

"Upon my word, Amy, this seems queer," Robert exclaimed, as they went to church together that Sunday morning.

Amy did not understand him, and looked up into his face with surprise.

"It *must* look queer to the towns-folk, to leave the old gentleman so much in the lurch—we, his intimate friends—and trudge off, as it were, to the opposition shop."

"Robert!" exclaimed Amy.

"Spiteful people in Chipnam—I hear there are a very fair stock of them about—must say we go to St. Martin's for the sake of the singing or the fine sermon, and don't much care about praying with your guardian in a simple and Christian-like fashion. It is as if

we don't think one church as good as another."

"Mr. Chark has never objected," said Amy, "and I have practised choral singing so long, Robert."

"If I were he, I am afraid I should show my bad tempers more often."

They repaired to St. Martin's as usual. For many years Robert had given up chapel for church, to the regret of his brother and sister, to whom he had confessed as much a short while after his arrival at Chipnam. Robert was not particular, however—the one flaw in his character was his little reverence for things sacred. Strong in his wealth and position, with everything going well with him, he had given little thought to the future, and little thanks for his good fortune in the present. He was one of the many who are religious after a fashion ; who go to church or chapel—they are not particular which—to admire a good sermon, and grumble at a bad one, as at a bad dinner that has been offered them—critical rather than prayerful beings. The world is well—or badly—stocked with them.

Robert went to church that morning to

watch Amy Saville. He did not know that; he would have scouted the idea, had it been propounded to him, and knocked down the propounder for his rascally allusion. But he went to church to keep an eye on Amy Saville.

He was not satisfied now. He had not forgotten "the stitch in the heart," and the absorbed, concentrative look of Amy during the lecture on "Chipnam in the Olden Time." He would have given something to know what was at the bottom of Frederick Alland's heart—what he thought of Amy?

Frederick Alland preached a powerful sermon that morning—one of his few and far between sermons, when his accusative voice rang throughout the aisles like the blast of a trumpet. There was no miracle-sermon that day—nothing that could render one uneasy, and wonder how many flaws there were in the Scriptures, how many interpretations could be put upon one sentence, which was sober fact, and which was intended for hyperbole. It was a sermon on the sin and sorrow in the world, and where lay the

only cure for it—the one infallible remedy that never fails.

Every one was absorbed in the sermon, even Robert Bayford, till he suddenly remembered Amy, and turned quickly towards her. What a strange look it was!—an absorbed, passionate, reverent look, as if the soul were escaping from the eyes, and losing its identity in him who spoke so earnestly and well. Robert's own pulse had quickened at Alland's words till he caught himself looking at Amy, and then there was a terrible revulsion of feeling, and the devil, or some special messenger sent from Pandemonium by express, took his place in his heart, and made an unholy temple of the place. He knew no more of the sermon; he felt only certain that Amy's interest was intense and unnatural—that she did not forget the preacher in the sermon, but—God forgive him if he were wrong, and God be thanked, too, for his error!—thought of him too much, and—worshipped him!

She saw the preacher, not the man. Evidently the Reverend Frederick Alland was a saint in her eyes, thought Robert—something



standing apart from their common humanity, that only wanted a nimbus round his head to finish him off neatly. He read all this, and more than this, on Amy's face, and forgot every word of the sermon. Once or twice he looked almost fiercely up at the preacher, to make quite sure that he was not preaching at Amy—that she was not in his thoughts when God's word was on his lip. A harsh suspicion, and an unjust one, which did not remain with him an instant. The cruelest satire that Thackeray ever gave voice to was on preachers—"They are only higher than ourselves by the height of their pulpit," he says; does he not spare one, or give credit for one earnest high-souled Christian in their midst? Robert was glad when the sermon was at an end, and the organist was playing the dismissal; the expression of the face, which until then might have been graven in stone, became less rapt and more natural, and Robert breathed freer. Still he was decidedly uncomfortable, and he felt there was distrust taking root in his heart. He abhorred suspicious people, and now he was becoming crafty and suspicious himself.

He must end all one way or the other—he must tell Amy how he had felt, and what he had thought, at the first opportunity—if he did not make a clean breast of it, he should burst!

Mr. Chark and Amy dined with Mr. Alland every Sunday—a little return, on Mr. Alland's part, for the hospitality offered up at the hills. Mr. William Chark could not fulfil his duties at St. Edward's, and go backwards and forwards up that long winding path to his villa—and Mr. Alland's house came in very handy as a haven of rest on the Sunday. "And this has gone on for years whilst I was away," thought Robert with a half-groan that day; "and Amy's heart may have drifted away from me, and she never the wiser." He had never dined with Mr. Alland, although that gentleman, knowing the facts of his betrothal, had invariably asked him; he had contented himself with leaving Amy to the care of her guardian, and meeting her thrice on the Sunday at St. Martin's; going back in the evening with her and Mr. Chark to the hill-side.

This day he accepted very promptly the

offer to dine with Mr. Alland, and crossed for the first time that gentleman's threshold. A stately home enough, formal and yet bachelor-like, with highly-polished furniture of a massive character, but all hard and cold, and with no signs of woman's handicraft to give an air of lightness and grace to the house. A dull place, and a dull, grave host, albeit a courteous one. Alland was always grave on Sundays—the importance of his duties weighed upon him, and rendered him to some extent a sad man. It would not have taken a great deal to make an ascetic of Mr. Alland—"when he grows older," thought Robert, "he will be a most miserable mortal. This very place gives me the horrors."

Was the shadow of all that was to happen upon Robert then, that he shivered as he sat down to the cold meat; or was it the trouble at his heart which rendered him dispirited?

Robert Bayford, who possessed spirits of considerable elasticity, might have revived somewhat in any house save Mr. Alland's. He was not surprised at its being a dull Sunday; his experience at his brother's assured him that

both church and chapel folk, who were at all serious, spent the day with some degree of solemnity. Possibly it was not the grave faces before him that kept him dull—James and Susan, especially Susan, had been as silent and thoughtful as owls, and yet had never given him the horrors like this! He did not feel happy in his mind or elevated in his thoughts; the white-faced menial who waited at table might have been from spirit-land, for what he knew of the matter. It was an unpleasant sensation to watch him flitting about, to feel that his fishy eyes were on his plate, and on him as a stranger who had intruded on the Alland domain.

There was a slight, disjointed conversation on a few matters connected with the church and church management, and Mr. Chark was inclined to rub his hands, and smile and appear like his usual self—only Mr. Chark! That worthy gentleman appeared to possess the idea that Sabbath faces were not required a yard and three-quarters long to render the day complete. You could not have told it was Sunday

afternoon by a glance at his pleasant countenance.

Still Mr. Alland was happy enough, or rather as happy as usual. It was his way of treating Sunday—not the worst way by many, but not the best. He was ever taciturn and gloomy, as though a host of serious thoughts was shadowing him, or the responsibilities of all that he had to say to his flock kept his mind very much distracted.

After dinner, he did, for a moment or two, get St. Martin's off his mind. Robert Bayford was standing at the dining-room window, with his hands behind him, clutching his elbows after his usual fashion, when Mr. Alland joined him.

"You have a fine stretch of garden ground here, Mr. Alland."

"Very fair. I think you will have the advantage of me, when the grounds of your villa are complete."

"Ah! I shall want room," said Robert—"room for my children's dancing feet, and the races across the lawn and round the flower-beds that are to come off *in futuro*."

Mr. Chark and his ward were sitting at the window at the other extremity of the room, so Mr. Alland and Robert Bayford had this little conversation all to themselves.

"But unless you compose your sermons after the peripatetic style of the ancients," added Robert, "I scarcely see what you want with so large a garden. You are never in it, Mr. Alland."

"Very seldom. I find a great deal to do in the town."

"I have it! You are keeping these large lawns and broad walks for the little ones too."

Robert Bayford had almost forgotten his morning's sensations, and his spirits were slowly but gradually rising. In almost a laughing mood, he laid his hand on the shoulder of the clergyman. Then there came a change again; the rector drew back so haughtily, and there was so much pride on his countenance.

"No, Mr. Bayford, I do not build my plans so far ahead," he said, coolly, "or indulge in such fancy pictures, to disturb the sober reality of my way."

"Are you for celibacy in the Church, then?"

"I am for celibacy in the Reverend Frederick Alland."

"At present," was the dry rejoinder.

"For ever, sir—for ever."

Was it accident, or did he glance towards Amy Saville as though the object of his love—if he had an earthly liking for any human being—was then before him, and he was afraid the words might reach her ear and pain her. He looked more stern and cold than ever; the subject was distasteful to him, and Mr. Bayford had spoken almost jestingly to one who never jested on Sundays or week days. Life was too solemn a duty to jest in its midst.

Robert and the young rector joined Mr. Chark and his ward.

"You will excuse me," said Mr. Alland, "but I have one or two things to consider in my study."

"Do you or the curate preach this afternoon?"

"I shall do all the service to-day."

He spoke as if it were a kind of penance he was imposing on himself for past misbehaviour,

as he went out of the room. Robert turned to Mr. Chark.

"You will reserve your strength till the evening, Mr. Chark?"

"I do not think I can attempt a visit to St. Martin's this afternoon."

(It may be remembered that St. Edward's was only opened morning and evening.)

"You are looking pale, Amy—I think we will keep Mr. Chark company. We have not seen much of our friend to-day."

"I should not like to miss the afternoon service, Robert."

Robert yawned, and stretched his arms above his head.

"Very well."

"But you are tired, Robert; and if you are going to sleep in the corner of the pew, as you did last Sunday, you may as well remain at home, and keep my guardian company. Not that I wish you to remain, if you have any desire to accompany me, sir."

She said it with a look of the old times—far-away times in India, when her heart was lighter, and possibly she had a higher opinion of him.



He felt inclined to go through fire and water for her after that, and would have stood fifty sermons—all of a lump, if it were necessary. But Mr. Chark seemed to have the idea that too much church was likely to make Robert a dull boy, and that Robert was hunting up an excuse to escape the afternoon service—so he came in at the wrong moment, and fixed him for a companion.

“Robert will stay with me at Mr. Alland’s,” said Mr. Chark. “I’m a selfish old gentleman, and partial to company. I always found the society of a dear friend of inestimable benefit.”

“Thank you for the compliment, sir,” said Robert laughing; and then, with a wistful look at Amy, which said, “Stop too,” as plain as it could speak, Robert took a chair by the front window.

Amy went to church. Less than three services a day to this theological young lady, would have savoured of profanity or back-sliding. She was a girl fond of religious excitement, which, by the way, is as dangerous an excitement as most things.

Keep the thoughts wholly apart from that which is termed "the frivolous;" train them from mundane matters, and set down as a stern rule—allowing of no deviation—that a novel is a bad book, the box-door of a theatre the quickest route to damnation, the society of the gay and the cheerful calculated to lead to temptations from which one may never escape, and a naturally good heart takes to religious excitement, as some poor fools shadowed by trouble rush madly to drink. Three services of a Sunday; prayer-meetings, Sunday schools, district visiting, classes for religious confabulation, classes for the practice of choral-singing, are all excellent things in their way—the best of things, carefully studied. But one can be too much of an enthusiast in such matters—leave not a moment to spare for the brightness and lightness of daily life; can bend to one subject and one thought every wish of the heart, and become cold, and hard, and narrow-minded, as people of one idea generally do. One may become saturated with the religious element till a laugh jars on the sensitive mind, and a

jest at things earthly sounds like a scoff at high heaven. Amy had almost reduced herself to this, despite the cheering influence of her guardian. Chipnam was a place that afforded but little change; her guardian was an invalid, and there was a powerful preacher ever seeking whom to convert, who called very often at the villa; and so Amy became an enthusiast in her way, and thought Mr. Alland one of the greatest and best of men. Not a very good or a very clever man, the reader will understand, but a saint from a pedestal, with not one failing to shadow the purity and nobility of his nature. Something more of a saint, young lady reader of mine, than even that pasty-faced darling for whom so many slippers and braces are worked—so many silver ink-stands and silk surplices subscribed for; something immeasurably above her and the world that lay around her, and shook its head—the wiser portion of it—at her girlish enthusiasm.

So Amy was one of the foremost members of St. Martin's congregation, missing not a service, or a congregational meeting; at work

ever at altar cloths and church decorations of an infinity of kinds—and hence her disregard for the wistful look of her lover, whose ideas concerning afternoon service being somewhat profane, need not be set down here to pervert a new generation of novel readers.

Amy went away, escorted by Mr. Alland, which was an event unbargained for by Robert, and rendered his companionship of less value to Mr. Chark. That amiable old gentleman lay full-length on the couch, and took stock through his gold-rimmed glasses of the young man, whose character he had learned to value at its just worth.

“You look repentant, Robert, for your neglect of church-duties.”

“I doubt, if it's *that*,” returned Robert, straightforwardly, “for one can have too much of a good thing.”

“Going to church at every opportunity, when I was much younger than yourself, never did me any harm, Bayford,” said the incumbent, half-reproachfully.

“You were were brought up for the church, my dear sir,” replied Robert; “and

as the twig is bent, &c. And what is more, you were the right man for the church."

"No; the wrong one. A weak frame, a feeble voice, and only the heart strong."

"That last is three-fourths of a minister's qualifications," said Robert, "especially a minister in a country place. Jemmy and Alland want a city apiece; there's not room here for high-pressure engines!"

"Hush, hush!" said the rector; "they're good, earnest men. They are doing good, and I don't mourn so much over my empty pews."

"You have a few adherents to a more simple style of worship."

"Yes; stanch adherents, who come to pray with me—think more of their prayers to God, than of the quality of the sermon to *them*."

"The right set. Amy and I will swell the congregation to-night. Why, I haven't sat under you yet."

"I preached a very fair sermon this morning, they tell me. Sometimes," with a kindling of his clear grey eyes, "I feel as able to fulfil my mission and speak to the purpose as

my younger contemporaries. They are both good lads, though of opposite views. Surely, Bayford, the time will come when church and chapel will see that they work to one end—surely,” sitting up in his excitement —“it is coming!”

Bayford was not sanguine, but he made no attempt to damp the ardour of the speaker.

“A sermon on the subject might have a good effect,” mused Chark.

“They’d gibbet you for a heretic in Chipnam.”

“Oh! the Chipnam people are softening down.”

He softened down himself a little while afterwards, and Robert turned the conversation to Amy. It did not require much turning, for Mr. Chark loved no one in the world like his ward, and it was a subject on which both could grow eloquent. It was Robert Bayford’s first long talk about Amy with her guardian—circumstances had never allowed him more than five minutes’ chat on the matter. Mr. Chark had first seen his old friend’s child when she came from India, a girl of sixteen years of

age ; but he was a childless man, and his was a heart that took readily to youth and innocence, and loved to cherish them. He promised to love her like a daughter when the father had solicited his guardianship, and no one could have more truly kept to the strict letter of his promise.

Speaking of Amy, however, they did not seem to understand each other thoroughly ; Mr. Chark always spoke of the loving but thoughtful and almost reserved girl—Robert of the merry-hearted child he had known all life and sunshine in India. Robert seemed to anticipate a return of her bright moods when they were more closely united ; Chark thought she would be the best, the most devoted, the most dutiful of wives. If she were deeply imbued with religious feeling, why, considering that her husband looked a little carelessly at sacred things, that was all the better for Robert and his children.

“We shall take our family pew at St. Edward’s, Mr. Chark,” cried Robert ; “and you must not scold us very much, if once or twice in three months we stray over to the old

chapel, and hear what Jemmy has to say on the one great subject."

"Your family pew will be at St. Martin's," laughed the incumbent; "don't build upon my out-of-the-way little place. Besides," he added, "you will find Amy a little firm on matters theological. I shall never forget the part she took against me when Mr. Alland and I had that long discussion about turning St. Martin's into a conservatory on Easter Sunday. She beat me, sir, clean out of the field of argument."

"Well—well!"

Robert had grown tired of the subject, or objected to that portion of it. He was silent for awhile, and when he would have continued it, Mr. Chark was asleep. Not wishing to disturb him, and thinking a nap after his entire performance of morning service likely to recruit his energy, Robert sat and watched Mr. Chark for a little while, and then rose cautiously and looked out of the window at the country road, along which Mr. Alland and Amy would presently be coming back again.

It was a hot summer's afternoon; the



chalky road was quite dazzling to the eyes; the hedge-rows opposite were dusty with the wind and the long drought. He wondered how many people had gone to St. Martin's after a two o'clock dinner down that blinding road, baked in the sun to a white heat. A dusty traveller came along at this juncture; a man who shuffled in his walk and kept close to the oaken fences of the few villas thereabouts, for the sake of the little shade to be obtained by those means.

"Poor vagabond!" soliloquized Bayford, "where has he been tramping to this hot afternoon, and whither does his journey end? I suppose he has had his loves and his likings at one time or another. I should like to know that man's antecedents. He must have seen a great deal of life, and have the matter for a thousand books within that ugly head-piece of his. Hi!"

The man had stopped, before Robert, forgetful of the sleeper, had flung up the window and called out to him. The traveller had put two dirty hands on the fence, and rested his chin upon his hands to have a good look at the

villa before the window opened and Robert Bayford appeared thereat.

“ Here, my man.”

“ My man ” stared as at a ghost, let the shilling fly by him—it was a good throw of Robert’s across the flower-bed, fir-trees, and oaken fence—and remained furtively regarding the unlooked-for donor. He recovered himself, however, and resembled more the professional mendicant an instant afterwards: he touched his hat, brought the rim thereof further over his eyes by the action, picked up the shilling, cried out, “ God bless yer honor ! ” with an Irish accent, and moved on closer to the palings.

“ Bless my soul ! Bayford, what’s the matter ? ” cried Chark from the sofa.

“ A poor devil trudging along there in the hot sun.”

“ A poor what ? ”

“ A poor beggar—didn’t you hear me ? ”

“ It didn’t sound like ‘ beggar,’ ” said Chark, drily ; “ but I was half asleep. Did you give him anything ? ”

“An odd shilling that was burning a hole in my pocket.”

“Dead against Mr. Alland’s rules—he objects to indiscriminate alms-giving. Do you see anything of our rector and Amy. Church must be over.”

“Yes; here they come!”

Robert had seen them coming before he alluded to them. There was that awkward stitch in the heart attacking him again; they were sauntering along so slowly, he was talking so earnestly, and she was listening to every word, and looking up into his face. And for him to feel jealous at her admiration for the minister so late in the day—he who had thought there was not a scrap of jealousy in his disposition! It did not strike him that when a man sits down to watch every look and action of her he loves, something must strike him as peculiar; he is on the watch for it, and looking through a medium which magnifies and distorts.

There was too much confidence—brotherly and sisterly regard—between preacher and maiden; he must stop it. Preachers were

like other men, and had hearts to be touched, and heads to be turned—young preachers like Alland more especially. And Amy looked so beautiful that afternoon, that if Alland could feel her hand upon his arm, and gaze so steadfastly into that lovely face, without a thought that she was one to love and make a home happy, why, he must be of the material of the figures that kept watch in the niches of St. Martin's Church. He, Robert Bayford, must not put his trust too much in preachers, or credit with too much goodness human nature. He was neither a sceptic nor a worldly man, but he had seen the world, and knew how much of evil there was in its midst.

Yes! he must stop it. Amy was an impressionable girl, and Frederick Alland was an earnest man; and if only Alland, priest as he was, began to think too much of what was likely to ensnare him, why, then, for Alland's sake, let him cut matters short!

With these feelings, Robert Bayford, had he been ten years younger, might have presented a soured, bull-dog aspect to society that afternoon; but he had his share of common

sense, and could show a fair front when his feelings were hurt. He had never been a man to give himself airs. At one-and-thirty years of age he was not going to begin.

Mr. Alland, on a Sunday at least, had dinner and tea at early hours. It was not six o'clock when the tea-things were removed from the table, and Mr. Alland was expatiating on a grievance which he had mentioned to Amy when they were coming home together from St. Martin's.

"There were not fifty people in the church. They must have been idling over their dinners, or sleeping the time away. My flock is falling away from me, or growing tired of good counsel."

"It was a very warm afternoon," commented Bayford.

"For the shepherd as well as the sheep, sir."

"Exactly. But the sheep were not compelled to go out in the sun, and the shepherd was."

"Not at all—there was my curate at St. Martin's. But the shepherd's heart was in

his work ; and he fancied there would be many disappointed, if he were not at his post."

Bayford did not reply. Mr. Alland was looking very white and stern—evidently offended with three-fourths of his congregation.

"I will have no falling away," said he, decisively ; "I will remind them to-night of their weakness, their passiveness—there shall be no retrogression while I am rector here."

He *will* do this, and there *shall* occur that ! This Mr. Alland was a proud and a severe man when the humour seized him. Robert wondered what he would look like in a passion.

"I am afraid I am going to offend you, Mr. Alland," said Robert.

"I don't think so," was the reply ; and Mr. Alland's steely blue eyes regarded Robert a little inquisitively.

"I am going to diminish the number of your regular followers to-night by taking Miss Saville to St. Edward's. I think we desert an old friend here a little too much."

"I don't complain of the abandonment, Bayford," cried Mr. Chark.

“Had my congregation visited St. Edward’s, I should not have complained either,” said Mr. Alland; “I have no objection to urge to your proposition, Mr. Bayford.”

It did not matter much if he had, Robert thought. Robert had made up his mind, and he could be very decisive when he pleased. Decision and tact in his merchant days in India had made his fortune.

“I should be sorry to lose Miss Saville very frequently,” added the rector of Chipnam; “her voice gives effect to the singing, and her attention sets a good example to the indolent and weary of my congregation.”

“Do you study effect much?” Bayford said, laughingly. He was sorry the words had escaped him the moment afterwards—they were not too courteous, and the rector had flushed up to the roots of his hair. For an instant there was fire in his eyes, and scorn and even passion in his countenance—the Reverend Frederick Alland had had a struggle in his time to keep an impetuous nature under restraint.

"You speak as if I were a showman, Mr. Bayford."

"Your pardon," Bayford hastened to add: "it was a question put hastily, but your remark sounded strangely, and took me off my guard. I have a very bad habit of speaking out."

"Well, it's an honest habit at all events," said Mr. Chark, rising.

"It depends upon the motive for speaking," added Mr. Alland, rising also.

Robert found himself seated alone with Amy. The two clergymen had gone into the hall to look for their hats.

"Is it necessary to change churches, as though we had grown tired of St. Martin's, Robert?" said Amy. "I think it is a bad practice to wander about from one place of worship to the other."

"I should like to attend service at St. Edward's this evening, and show I do not prefer Mr. Alland's doctrines to your guardian's."

"But I——"

"But I wish you to accompany me, Amy."



Surely you are not so devoted to St. Martin's that prayer in another church appears like a sin to you?"

"No," she murmured. He spoke very strangely, looked very intently at her; she could not understand him that evening.

"Still, if you be anxious to attend the parish church to-night—don't mind me. I shall find my way to St. Edward's with good Mr. Chark's assistance. It's only my wish—that's all."

"Robert!"

He had turned to the window, and did not look round at her appeal. Had he done so, he might have caught her to his breast, she looked so amazed, so wounded, there were such bright drops in her eyes! But he left the wish to be considered, to work itself in opposition to her own without interference—he was curious to learn what the result would be.

He was nervous about it, too, and turned somewhat pale during the few minutes which elapsed before she made her re-appearance equipped for walking. It was early still; Mr.

Chark and Mr. Alland were only on the doorstep; the four went along the carriage-drive together. Which way would she turn?—wondered Robert Bayford.

He had not a doubt in his own mind, although his heart beat a little faster with expectation when they were near St. Martin's, past which church was the narrow lane that led on to St. Edward's in the fields. He felt her hand rest on his arm more firmly as they neared the church—they bade Mr. Alland adieu, and were going on together.

"God bless you, Amy!" he exclaimed, pressing the hand to his side, "you must forgive me, if I am a bit of a bear at times."

She coloured, but did not answer. Her own feelings were confused—she felt very miserable one moment, and then very happy the next—her own thoughts were beyond the power of analysis. She was glad that Robert Bayford had been stern, and that she had had to forgive him—sorry that she was led away from St. Martin's, and should miss, for the first time for some years, the eloquent words of the Reverend Frederick Alland. Religious as she

was, she could but think of that sermon which she had missed, and of the members of the flock who would miss her, in the midst of her prayers at St. Edward's, and of the simple sermon which followed them. Robert was not a fair critic that evening ; for he had made up his mind to admire everything at St Edward's—having his plans for the future, in which that edifice was concerned. He listened very attentively to Mr. Chark ; and any one who listened attentively, and suffered himself not to be lulled to sleep by a very mild, soft voice—I will not say monotonous—could always find good stuff in the sermon. No one had higher, better thoughts, or expressed himself in better language, than Mr. Chark. His discourses embraced but one subject ; he was always preaching peace amongst men, and a full pardon to the sinner that repenteth. He had an old-fashioned idea that that was sufficient, and, consequently, was attended by old-fashioned people who did not care for sensation sermons, who had a great respect for their incumbent and no ear for music.

Robert found the quiet little church quite a relief, after the noise and "style" of St. Martin's. The choir at the latter, the gas, the showy altar-cloth, the suspicious-looking Roman candles, the dressy congregation, the long-gowned pew-opener, with a stick in his hand, even the powerful preacher who made the walls ring again, seemed a demonstrative religion, after this peaceful, quiet, dimly-lighted edifice. But then Robert was bigoted, and had a leaning to dissent, as was natural, considering his early education; and although he liked a good rousing sermon, and a sermon that assured him what a sinner he was, still he was tired of St. Martin's—Amy was too fond of it!

Mr. Chark did not immediately follow Robert and Amy towards his house on the hill; he talked rather extravagantly of overtaking them, and bade them go on slowly. So they had the long winding road up the slope all to themselves—this odd pair of lovers, one of whom did not know her own mind, or would not confess to the knowledge.

Amy was more capricious, and consequently more womanly, that evening, than Robert had

been a witness to since his return from India. He could not understand her, which was very natural, considering that she did not understand herself. He had been so good-tempered, so pliant, so anxious to make her every word law, that his sudden expression of firmness had inextricably confused her. She did not know whether she ought to feel herself aggrieved or not ; 'whether he ought not to be checked before he became too encroaching, and degenerated into the autocrat.

Perhaps it would have been as well if Robert Bayford had said no more that night, and not have still further helped to confuse matters. But he was anxious to let Amy know all that had been in his thoughts that day—by way of atonement perhaps—and all his plans for the days ahead of them.

"I think when we are married, Amy, it must be good-bye to St. Martin's."

She turned very pale. This constant harping on St. Martin's jarred upon her sensitiveness that evening. She had given way to him that night—why could not he let her be still ?

"Why?"

“ Shall I tell you what a host of thoughts I have suffered from to-day, Amy ?”

“ If you like.”

He did not relish the answer, but he told her. He was not a man to keep anything back ; and so, pressing the hand a little closer to him, he told her everything. That he had been jealous of Alland, that he feared she might be thinking of Alland too much, that love for the preacher often slid imperceptibly into affection for the man—Boccaccio, master of hearts, understood that five hundred years ago ! And if she were not likely to do that, still, the preacher was human, and the penitent was beautiful. So he ran on, hacking unmercifully at the idol which Amy had set up, making it no better, higher than other men—speaking, perhaps, a little too caustically against churchmen in general, and implying that, after their marriage, for the sake of their old friend, and out of respect to him and his honest worth, High Church must be exchanged for Low—Mr. Alland for Mr. Chark. Before marriage, because he distrusted her—afterwards, because he respected Mr. Chark ! Amy struggled to

reply, said one or two sharp things which made Robert Bayford wince, finally burst into tears, and accused him of suspecting her, and of slandering one of the best of God's servants. Amy Saville in tears was not to be withstood ; he clasped her in his arms ; he kissed her ; he was half-inclined to cry too, this big, full-hearted fellow who was in love with a girl ten years his junior. Let it be Mr. Alland—Mr. Anybody, only don't cry about it—he had always hated to see a woman cry ; upon his soul, he could not stand it !

He did not enter the villa that night. They lingered at the gate till her tears were dry, and she was looking very white in the face—white-faced and pink-eyed like a rabbit.

“This is our first and last little storm, Amy,” said he. “We shall have clear weather—the best of weather—after this.”

“I hope so.”

“Why, in a fortnight's time we shall be man and wife. How we shall laugh at this little jealous tiff of mine !”

“Please, go now,” implored Amy. “I can

see my guardian coming up the hill—this is not a night for explanation.”

But it was. Although Robert saw her no more that night, yet much was explained, and still more was guessed at.



## CHAPTER VI.

## CONFESSION.

ROBERT BAYFORD bade good-night to Mr. Chark half-way down the hill, after exchanging a few words with that almost exhausted clergyman. He was rather anxious to offer his arm up the remaining part of the ascent ; but Mr. Chark would not listen to his pressing solicitations, and Robert went on to his brother's cottage.

Our business is with Mr. Chark this chapter; so we turn back with him, and proceed slowly and laboriously towards the villa once more. Mr. Chark came to the impression that he was not getting any stronger that night. Two ser-

mons seemed to exhaust him more than they used; presently he would have to give up the church, or the villa up the heights before him.

He was fairly beaten when he had reached the villa, and was standing with one hand on the gate panting very much; he advanced after a while slowly and feebly along the garden path. At the door he stopped and rested again. It made Amy nervous to see him enter very much exhausted; he would go in perfectly cool and collected. So he stood in the shadow of the doorway, taking his time, and looking back at the moonlight and the Chipnam hills. He had nearly recovered his breath, when he lost it again as suddenly as though it had been snatched away; for a deep, unmistakable sob sounded only a few yards from him.

“Amy!” he gasped.

It was a great surprise to him. She was a girl who had repressed all emotion, who, he thought, took the affairs of life a little more quietly than most girls of her age—and was even perhaps age-ing too rapidly. Even her reli-

gious fervour, and her enthusiasm in matters relating to St. Martin's, had troubled him not a little; he was a generous-hearted man, and knew how fitting for youth is even a fair share of—youth's frivolity!

"They have quarrelled," he muttered; and then the sob startled him again, and drew him hastily to the window, where the lace curtains only hung between him and the lighted interior. He could see two mould candles burning in plated candlesticks upon the table, and the piano at the end of the room, and his own portrait—when he was a younger man—over the piano, but where was Amy? Surely the dark sweep of something on the carpet near the sofa was Amy—Amy suffering from bodily and mental prostration to an incredible extent to reduce her thus low!

The poor old gentleman possessed but very little nerve; there had been little to disturb him save that confounded up-hill path for many years, and he wrung his hands, dropped his stick, and groped for it in the flower-bed, before he could find courage to approach the window. He had presence of mind to pass

through into the room cautiously and silently. He turned at once towards the place on the carpet near the couch. Yes, there she was, crouched upon the floor, with her head buried in her arms, rocking herself slowly to and fro, and giving way now and then to one of those passionate convulsive sobs, that echoed so strangely in that silent room. The old clergyman went towards her, and laid his hand upon her shoulder.

“Amy, my child, what is this?”

Her hands dropped from her face—she glanced towards him, and then assumed the old position.

“Oh! don’t ask me, guardian. I have been a fool and a coward—I shall be so to the end.”

“Haven’t I a right to ask?”

She did not answer. The two retained their relative positions, the hand that was gathering force and trembled less still rested on her shoulder.

“Amy, all this is very childish, or must be something more serious than I fear. I put it to your own heart to explain—I do not

ask it by the right of my guardianship, but by the strength of my love and the depth of my faith in you."

She wavered. He felt she shrank from him.

"You have parted ill friends with Robert Bayford?"

"No."

"Then—I think I am right—you have found out that you do not love him well enough to be his wife?"

She cowered more and more—by her shrinking away from his touch, by her silence, he guessed that he had arrived at the truth. He guessed all at once—why had he been so blind to that which a child might have seen a year ago?

"Amy, will you tell me how all this happened?—what has caused the change, and is bringing to one honest, true-hearted man so keen a disappointment?"

He took her hand in his, and sought to raise her; after a little effort, he and she were side by side upon the couch, her face buried on his shoulder.

"Well, it is a long story, my dear," he said

soothingly, "I do not think we need dive into its prolixities to-night. Let us come at the one truth, and that at least will show us how to proceed in the shadowy work one or both of us has to perform. You do not love Robert Bayford?"

The story, as much as he wished to know, as much as is necessary for the purpose of this tale, escaped then in this wise:

"Oh! guardian, I have tried so hard to love him. He was so dear and good a friend to me in India, and I took my girl's liking for love before I went away, and promised to be his wife when he should come back in the distant years to claim me. I tried so hard to keep true—after all his truth and his strong love for me. But I cannot make him happy—I should never make him happy!"

"Very wrong—very wrong, my poor Amy," murmured the clergyman.

"I cannot believe that I have outlived my love for him, and he so unchanged and honest—I am ashamed to dash his hopes to the dust, and wrong a nature that has always

been above my own—purer, higher, and more noble. I forced myself to believe—to believe,” she added, after a struggle with her breath, “that I did love him, that only his long absence rendered him strange to me, and that I should understand him better in good time. I fancied even that all my old love was coming back until—until to-night.”

“Drawing closer to that reality which would have been a crime, Amy—though I fear it is a crime committed every day—you awake to the truth as is natural—as in a nature like your own might have been expected. Well, thank God for it, Amy—this must be all for the best.”

“And Robert?”

“Leave him to me—I will see him in the morning.”

Amy was not the only woman who was a coward at heart. She breathed freer at the thought of escaping the most terrible explanation—the most humiliating explanation—that a woman can make to the man whom she has promised to marry. She had thought more than once to marry him rather than avow it—

the confession was so terrible, and the one to be struck down had known her and loved her from a child.

She had not the heart to strike the blow herself, and see the hope and light die out of his face. She was very unsettled—very unhappy.

And if I am ever a woman and circumstanced like Amy Saville, I shall undoubtedly follow her example. I shall not be able to strike to the death the unsuspecting victim before me, any more than I could have rushed at the Malakoff without shutting my eyes. I shall find a dear friend, of gentle and suave manners, to tear his best hopes to shreds as tenderly as possible—just as Amy Saville found her guardian of such infinite service.

I am afraid my lady readers will be seriously offended with Amy Saville after this—will not take into account her tender age when she left India, and so let him who bound her by a premature engagement receive a share of the blame; will not put to the credit side of her account the struggles she had had, the hopes that her love would all return, the shame of



the avowal that she was no better than the carpenter's daughter—"fair, fickle, and false."

In a very short time we shall meet the gentleman whom this most particularly affected, and see how he bore the full shock of the storm.

Mr. Chark thought about that gentleman all night—could not sleep for thinking of him till the morning, and then dreamed that he was toiling up hill with Robert Bayford hanging round his neck behind. He had promised Amy to break the news, but it was a disagreeable task, and it made him nervous to think about it. Not that he feared his power to make the revelation with the delicacy of a true gentleman; but that he felt, however it was made, the shock to his friend would not be pleasant to witness.

Chark was a man of tender heart and disliked sensation scenes. But he would not have delegated his power to another for the bishopric of Garthshire. He had faith in his power to console—rather too intense a faith, for he had little knowledge of the effect of a great disappointment to some natures.

He had an idea that it was better for Bayford that he was not a younger man, that he was a man of the world, to whom the loss of a girl's love would not be so serious a blow—not a blow to unsettle a man, and render him foolish! Probably it would take him to India again, or start him anew in some great business, where he would make more money, perhaps a name, and die famous.

When he went away that morning, before seeing Amy, he felt thankful that Robert Bayford was a man whose heart was sound, and whose nerves were of iron!

## CHAPTER VII.

## A COUNCIL OF WAR.

MR. WILLIAM CHARK went down the hill at a snail's pace. He was accustomed at times to think of his Sunday sermons, and rehearse them going down that hill; and after the same fashion he thought of the story which he had to tell Robert Bayford, and of the best manner of relating it.

Man disposes! He would call at James Bayford's house, and ask to see Robert Bayford of the servant in a very cool and nonchalant manner, as if nothing had transpired that was calculated to alarm the family. If Mr. James Bayford should chance to see him, he would

say that he had called to take Robert for a stroll—a piece of hypocrisy for which he hoped to be forgiven. He had another idea, that the Reverend James Bayford was too hard and unsympathizing to be made the confidant of a love-story—that he would say something very harsh and ungenerous concerning Amy Saville, if he were apprised of the news. He felt perfectly certain that Robert Bayford would wish to keep the news to himself—to depart perhaps with all his troubles neatly packed in his own breast, and under lock and key. When he was away, he would fling the key overboard in the deep waters, where there would be no fetching it back, and the lock would remain for ever and a day unpickable by human sagacity. So Robert and he would go for a stroll, and ascending the hill—no, on second considerations, he would not go up any more hills than he could help—and going along the high road, his hand on the strong man's arm, he would ask if he were prepared for a great surprise—a great loss—and then tell him all, assuring him that it was but a little trouble, which God would give him

strength to bear. Not a trouble to rob him of his health, energy, or fortune, merely to take away from him the love of a girl who could have never made him happy. So the best thing for him, when he came to think of it seriously !

To reach the Reverend James Bayford's house, it was not necessary to go through the town; there was a quiet road running parallel with Chipnam High Street, which was a little more out of the way, but more quiet, and gave him further opportunity to thoroughly cut and dry the details of his story. Through the town he would meet a hundred obstacles, and have to return the salutes of a hundred of the town's-folk—he would take the longer but the more quiet way to the cottage.

Man often goes out of his way with a similar object, and meets almost every one whom he has been anxious to avoid. In this instance, half the parishioners seemed in the country lane that morning; a little girl who attended regularly at St. Edward's stopped to curtsy, and threw him out of his reverie; a

little farther on, he encountered Dorcas Glade and her brother—the latter not yet quite strong enough for business—and was forced to congratulate Mr. Glade on his recovery, and to hear that gentleman begin about the lectures at once, and to remind him of the dead failure that the first had been. Glade was a terrible fellow to launch forth unpleasant truths—an incorrigible being.

The Reverend William Chark reached the dissenter's cottage very strong in his intention, very well assured that he was the right man to calmly and quietly cut at the tree destined to fall. Before the cottage he was not so firmly convinced of that fact—thought he might be misinterpreted, be supposed to have used his influence against Robert, and in favour of—*whom?* He could only guess, but Robert would guess too; the flash of the lightning would not be more quick than the first reason for it all to Robert Bayford. And after all, if he should not receive the news quietly, but give way, as he had seen strong men do in his time—it would be a painful task. Still he, William

Chark, of Chipnam, had never shirked from a painful task ; he was only conscious that his strength was not what it used to be, and that a little unnerved him now.

He pondered upon this with his hand on the gate, finally made a dash forwards, and crossed the lawn, along which he, James and Robert had discussed the church and chapel question only a month or two ago. Under the porch he felt assured that he was quite collected again, and master of himself—that his features wore an every-day air, from which nothing was to be learned. He reached his hand to the knocker, which receded from him as he did so, for some one from within opened the door at the same instant, and left him with his hand in the air.

Of all men in the world—James Bayford!

“ I saw you at the gate. Come in, sir.”

“ I—I thought I would call as I was passing,” stammered Mr. Chark ; “ thought, perhaps—perhaps that Robert was likely to be coming my way.”

He could not help stammering, for the dis-

senter had such piercing dark eyes, and they were looking through him now. He could almost fancy that his story was emblazoned on his face, the young man seemed to stare so intently into it.

“Will you step this way, Mr. Chark?”

James Bayford led the way into a room at the back of the house—away from the parlour wherein to usher him would have been more natural, Mr. Chark thought. A room with a green baize door, that swung too upon another door before you entered the sanctum, where there were many books and a library-table with some sheets of manuscript thereon. It looked suspicious to take him into the study, and lock the door very carefully behind them. Suspicion was soon reduced to certainty.

“Mr. Chark,” said the minister, turning suddenly upon him, “something has happened.”

“God bless my soul!” exclaimed Mr. Chark, with a little jump, “what made you think so?”

“—Something that affects Robert, and that may require from you and me consideration as



to the best means of breaking the news to him."

"What—what made you think that something had happened, Mr. Bayford?"

"Yours is an honest face, Mr. Chark, and tells all its troubles to the world."

"Well," with a little sigh, "I am very much troubled, Mr. Bayford."

"Yours is a story, too, the relation of which I think I can spare you. There is only one tale that could affect you to relate, and give you that peculiar look."

The old gentleman had taken a seat, and was letting his hands rise and fall on his knees, as though he were playing an imaginary organ. He had set his hat on the ground at his feet, and then, in his nervous excitement, given it a kick which had sent it spinning towards the window.

"It's all very sad, sir. I am very sorry," he murmured.

"Miss Saville has found out that my brother is not the most suitable man she could select for her husband—she has told you so, and you are here to tell Robert."

“Yes, sir—yes.”

He felt very much like a child. What had become of his strength of mind, and power of nerve to meet all this?

“God acts for the best; you and I, friend, less impulsive and better schooled to meet such disappointments as the world can bring us, can see that, will see that, better than Robert.”

“He—he will not feel it as a very—very serious blow, I hope?”

“It is a very serious blow, sir,” was the quiet answer.

“Oh! no,” cried the full-hearted clergyman; “he will not think that. Your brother is——”

“My brother is a child,” interrupted James, “with the confidence of a child in the faith of things that must fade, and with the heart of a child easily touched by affection, and easily wrung. There are some children to whom a disappointment is terrible—Robert is one of them.”

“My dear sir, you regard this in a very sombre light,” said Mr Chark; “you forget

that your brother is no longer a very young man. He has had his experience of life, and will not—that is, I hope will not——”

“Mr. Chark, will you tell me this story as simply and briefly as you can?” said the dissenter, seeing that the old gentleman had come abruptly to a full stop; “I who know my brother’s nature better than your own, may be able to suggest a plan of action.”

Mr. Chark told his story, adding all the extenuating circumstances on Amy’s side, which he thought would not prejudice his hearer too much against his ward. Naturally enough he dwelt long upon her defence, and upon her struggles to keep her word; and Mr. Bayford listened politely, but was evidently entirely unmoved by her troubles. Throughout it all he was thinking of his brother Robert, and the trouble that was on its way to *him*.

“It’s not a very uncommon story, I dare say,” said James Bayford, when the incumbent had concluded—“very sad and grim in its details, and affecting each auditor differently, according to his view of the case, and his

stake in this lottery of life. Your stake and mine are not heavy ones, and we," with a faint smile, "can afford to take it coolly."

"I do not take it coolly," said Mr. Chark emphatically.

"Nor I, sir."

Mr. James Bayford responded almost fiercely. For his brother he felt more than he cared to own. Theirs had been a strong affection from childhood; a sea dividing them had not weakened their love for each other. A blow to Robert Bayford was a side thrust to James, who could have borne his own trials better than his brother's—for with his brother's remained so much of uncertainty.

"I must break the news to him," said he.

"Pardon me," instantly replied Chark, "but you must allow me to do that. He is my friend—I am the bearer of that news."

"You know nothing of Robert Bayford."

"I know that he is a dear young friend of mine. You may understand him better, but I believe that he would hear more from me than from any one in the world."

Mr. James Bayford smiled. He did not believe that.

"I have a right to tell him."

"If you knew the best way," commented James Bayford.

"There can be but one. Gently, quietly, bidding him be resigned to disappointment, and have trust in God's future."

"Mr. Chark, you do not know how he loved that girl!" exclaimed the young dissenter; "how everything—I fear even his God—was second to her. It has been his one hope for years,—every letter that he wrote to me from India spoke of it,—every action of his life here in England has been ruled by it. For his future, sir, I hold your fickle ward responsible."

Mr. Chark winced. He could say but very little in defence, and the indignation of the brother was so manifest and just. Still, he intended to hold fast to his one point nevertheless.

"You regard this too seriously, I hope," he remarked.

"We shall see, sir. We must do nothing hastily,—we have to deal with one who is rash and demonstrative. All who have known Robert Bayford should help us thoroughly, and think what is best for him."

"He is absent?"

"He has gone for a walk on the Downs."

The incumbent half rose.

"I will go and——"

"You will sit still," was the quick response of the other; "my sister, who loves him very much, and understands him perhaps better than I, has a right to hear the story."

Mr. Chark ejaculated "Miss Bayford" in dismay.

"In matters of moment, her advice is of value," added James; "the Bayfords have always worked together."

He touched a hand-bell, and then went to the door and unlocked it.

"Tell Miss Bayford I wish to see her in the study," he said to the little maid-servant who responded to his summons.

An instant afterwards, Miss Bayford made

her appearance, and turned with surprise to Mr. Chark.

“Susan,” said her brother, “come and help us in this trouble, for poor Robert’s sake.”

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.













